SATURDAY SPECIAL / E4

An enchanted evening with Tita, Nikki, Jesi, Pilita, Angie, other friends forever

BUSINESS / B1

Peso ends year up 7.6% against $; 49.03 highest in nearly 6 years

WORLD / A19

Saddam bids family farewell as he awaits execution

SPORTS / A21

Pacquiao gets better offer from De la Hoya

Janjalani brod gives saliva for DNA testing

By Jocelyn R. Uy, in Manila, and Julie S. Alipala, in Cotabato City

THE JAILED BROTHER OF ABU SAYYAF chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani yesterday agreed to give saliva samples for DNA testing after he was threatened with solitary confinement and removal of his protection from attacks by jail gangs, a prison source said.

JANJALANI, A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, December 30, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 22 P18
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Head-banging snakes predict China quakes

BEIJING—CHINA HAS come up with an earthquake prediction system which relies on the behavior of snakes, state media said Thursday, two days after two quakes struck off neighbor Taiwan.

HEAD-BANGING, A11

Stocks near 10-year high

FILIPINO traders at the Philippine Stock Exchange at the close of markets on Friday afternoon celebrate the rise of Philippine shares to the best level yet since April 7, 1997 lifted by stocks with rosy growth prospects. The benchmark PSE Index advanced 39.16 points or 1.3 percent, to 2,982.54. The uptrend will persist till next week, say fund managers. AP PHOTO

Market ends year 42% better than in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez
Business

SHARES SHOT UP TO A near 10-year high yesterday, the last trading day for the year, boosted by hopes of continued economic growth, lower interest rates and robust corporate earnings in 2007, according to fund managers.

From its close in 2005, the market ended the year up by a hefty 42.3 percent.

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) Index surged 39.16 points or 1.33 percent to 2,982.54 yesterday.

This was the index's best finish since April 7, 1997 when it settled at 2,998.96, the PSE said.

"This is positioning for next year. Investors recognize that the market is poised to breach the 3,000 level," Head Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Philippines Inc.

The total amount traded P2.92 billion, with 53 gainers and 45 losers.

For the week to Dec. 29, the index rose 4.35 percent or 124.23 points.

There was no trading on Monday and Tuesday which were holidays.

STOCKS A8

Convicted ex-solon on 'holiday break' from jail

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Tarra V. Quismundo

INMATES AT ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S most heavily guarded prisons missed murder convict and ex-congressman Jose Villarosa on Christmas Day, which would have been his first behind bars.

Security sources said the former Occidental Mindoro representative left the maximum security compound of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City late afternoon of Dec. 24 and had yet to come back from what they believed to be a "holiday break."

NBP Director Vicente Ylanan yesterday denied that Villarosa—a central figure in a sensational murder case—had been granted a holiday furlough.

He said the former congressman suffered a heart attack on the night of Dec. 24 and had to be rushed to the Makati Medical Center.

The convict's legs were also swollen due to diabetes and his blood pressure had shot up, Ylanan said over the phone.

"It was emergency in nature," he said. "We had to take him out of jail and bring him to another hospital because we do not have the facilities to attend to his needs."

The reportedly sick death convict is under a very tight watch by NBP jailguards, Ylanan added.

But some prison insiders do not buy the story.

Villarosa was one of seven people—the others have become known in the media as the "Mamburao Six" farmers—who were cursed out the death penalty on March 1 by a Quezon City lower court for murdering the two sons of Villarosa's political rival, former Rep. Ricardo Quirolgo, over land and politics in Occidental Mindoro.

The killings occured on Dec. 13, 1997.

CONVICTED, A6

WATCH THE GIRL. The home of Hergielyn Dimagiba in Fairview, Quezon City, from where Valera allegedly came from before his arrest Friday dawn for traffic violation, among other things, was searched by cops.

Cops hold Valera; girl friend's home searched

By Alcuin Papa and DJ Yap

POLICE YESTERDAY ARRESTED and detained Abra Gov. Vicente Valera, a suspect in the killing of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr., then searched a house he had visited hours earlier where his supposed "girl friend"—reportedly a former model—lives.

Valera and the woman, Hergielyn Dimagiba, was just a "common friend."

But he was not arrested for the Bersamin killing.

The governor was arrested after his vehicle, a Chevrolet Suburban, was flagged down on Commonwealth Avenue for traveling without license plates and for using a siren.

Valera is now also facing charges of illegal possession of firearms.

Seven guns—one HK MP5 9-mm automatic assault rifle and six AR-15 rifles—were found inside the vehicle in pouch bags. Later, a fragmentation grenade with its pin almost pulled out was found inside the vehicle. But Valera said the grenade was "planted."

Police said the guns had no permits.

COPS HOLD, A15

'NOLI,' PENGUIN CLASSICS

Rizal joins ranks of Dickens, Austen

By Joselito B. Zulueta

JOSE RIZAL'S "NOLI ME TANgere" has been published in a new English translation and released worldwide by Penguin Books, one of the major publishing houses of the English-speaking world, under the Penguin Classics imprint. The publication effectively canonizes the novel as one of the classics of world literature.

It is the first time that a Southeast Asian title has been included in the Penguin Classics, which was started in 1946 with the publication of E.V. Rieu's translation of Homer's "Odyssey."

In the book's blurb, Penguin tells the "Noli" as "the book that sparked the Philippine revolution" and "the great novel of the Philippines."

"[It] was the first major artistic manifestation of Asian resistance to European colonialism, and Rizal became a guiding cornerstone—and martyr—for the revolution that would subsequently rise up in the Spanish province," Penguin said.

The new translation of the "Noli" was done by an American writer, Harold Augenbraum, a scholar of Hispanic-American letters and the curator of the Latino collection at the New York Public Library.

JUST A TOUCH, but it means a lot to passerby Elmira Caloy to be able to do something, anything for the national hero like wiping off the dust on his statue at the Luneta, to honor and thank him on his 110th death anniversary today. JOHN ALCORIZA

National hero a prisoner of myths

By Anabeth R. Ocampo

LAST JULY, A SEPIA PHOTOgraph made the rounds of e-mail and blogs that had the look of archival material and was titled "National Hero."

While most people recognized that it was Manny Pacquiao's head superimposed with the use of Photoshop technique on what appeared to be Abraham Lincoln's body, others imagined it to be a long-lost or newly discovered snapshot of the national hero Jose Rizal.

Fortunately, this urban legend was nipped in the bud before it could take on a life of its own. However, some legends never die, like the one that suggested that Rizal fathered Adolf Hitler or, even more fantastic, that our

NATIONAL, A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Administration lineup for Senate race ready

STAND UP AND DELIVER. President Macapagal-Arroyo poses for TV cameras during the raging of her New Year's message Friday at The Mansion in Baguio City in one of her security escorts former's in the background with an umbrella.

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

ALREADY GEARING UP for next May's polls, the Arroyo administration is building a lineup of senatorial candidates that is "winnable and at the same time responsive to the needs of our country," according to presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio.

Claudio said he could not yet disclose the names in the administration's former slate. He said majority leaders would make the announcement "when we're ready."

He said an announcement of a partial lineup would be made in January and the inking of the announcement would be done based on the opposition's moves.

According to administration strategists, Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., Makabayang Koalisyon ng Mamamayang Pilipino party-list representative, may be one more name to complete its three-list of candidates, whose names he did not reveal.

A highly placed source in the ruling Lakas-CMD party revealed, however, that aside from incumbent Senators Manuel Villar, Ralph Recto and Juan Arroyo, the list of possible administration candidates might include Lanao del Sur Vicente Magsaysay, president of the Governor's League; Manila Mayor Lito Atienza; Representatives Pichay, Eileen Sarmiento, Marcelino Libanan and Abraham Kahlil Mitra; Bukidnon Governor Jose Maria Zubiri Jr., a former senator, and presidential chief of staff Mike Defensor.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri is being considered for the slate also, but he has yet to make up his mind, according to the latter's official.

The source said President Macapagal-Arroyo would have the last say on who would be included in the slate since she would be to campaign manager.

Defensor became the first administration candidate to announce to get a presidential endorsement when the President herself announced his candidacy during a dinner last Wednesday with Northern Luzon governors and mayors led by Benguet Gov. Luis "Chito" Sueppaen. She asked for them to support Defensor, who will campaign next week.

Pichay said no Cabinet secretary was aiming to run for the Senate, adding that Claudio would play a "pivotal role" in the selection.

"Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita doesn't want to run," he said, and neither apparently was Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

Meanwhile, the much-vaunted opposition slate has yet to calm off, weighed down by the staggering number of politicians incumbent, newcomers and big-boxers vying to be included in the magic 12.

The latest count of anti-Arroyo rabies throwing their hat in the senatorial derby is 16, according to Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.

Administration Representative Edwin Ug and Defensor Claudio said it recommend that the opposition's slate was "totally composed of old faces and recycled personalities."

Ug, the Lakas cohort for Cagayan Valley, said the administration's "political machinery (was) ready to go full steam ahead to reach for the victory of our candidates in the national and local levels".

Pichay noted that "80 percent of congressmen, governors and mayors are solidly behind the administration slate. With that numerical superiority, I wonder how the opposition can sweep the midterm elections."

"If they think they can do that they are dreaming because the administration candidates will clobber them," he said.

Claudio said the administration was addressing the May 2007 polls in three components—the immortal, congressional and local elections. Each component would have separate campaign modules and strategies, he said.

Winning elections in credible way in May on top of GMA agenda in 2007

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

STILL HAUNTED BY THE grievous sin she allegedly committed in 2004, President Macapagal-Arroyo is placing the May elections as the top of her priority list in 2007 with the end-goal of not only winning the polls but winning them in a credible way.

"It is the most important political event in the country now. Of course it's number-by political activity," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told a Palace briefing yesterday.

"It is important for the administration to win in 2007, but it is an election that is regarded as credible, orderly and peaceful," said Gabriel Claudio, the presidential adviser to political affairs.

Ermita and Claudio said the win what the administration confirmed would work on.

"A victory for the administration in a credible election will show all the country because it will enhance the image and reality of political stability and economy thereby boosting investors confidence as well as the private investments for an economy takeoff. An unfavorable result [in] the [May] elections, unlikely and peaceful elections are wins and unacceptable to most the people can make in 2007," Claudio said.

Ermita said he hoped the opposition would not hurry on the administration of administration cheating in the 2004 elections during the campaign.

"Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita doesn't want to run," he said, and neither apparently was Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

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Malacañang support for Garci whips up political storm

CONTROVERSIAL FORMER COMmission commissioner Virgilio "Garci" Garcillano is again whipping up a political storm.

The opposition Liberal Party in a statement released yesterday said Malacañang's endorsement of his candidacy for congressman now "like rubbing salt into the festering, unhealed wounds."

President Arroyo, having received Garcillano's endorsement and Malacañang's endorsement of his candidacy for congressman now "like rubbing salt into the festering, unhealed wounds."

President Arroyo, having received Garcillano's endorsement and Malacañang's endorsement of his candidacy for congressman, has refused to answer questions on poll fraud suggested in the so-called "Hello, Garci" tape, which catches President Arroyo talking the Comelec official about a one-million vote lead which the 2004 vote count was padding out.

"If Garcillano candidacy can turn the very heart of the festering crisis of the legitimacy, accountability and credibility of the present administration... and puts into question the government's commitment to implement electoral reforms," added Representative Nereus Acosta, LP secretary general.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel had to openly deny reports that "Dr. Garcillano" should not be in the House of Representatives; he should be in Bilibid [Prison] for his role in the wiretapping scandal that suggested he and the President conspired to rig the results of the 2004 presidential election to cheat her victory."

"Malacañang has created a monster and they have no choice but to support him lest he spill the beans," roared Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, former president of the influential Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

From Malacañang, Executive secretary Eduardo Ermita played it up.

"I believe we will come to a beautiful solution," Ermita said.

In an interview with DZRH radio yesterday morning, Secretary Ermita expressed confidence that any dispute on who the administration camp would back in Bukidnon (Garcillano's home province) would be resolved by the party's internal mechanisms.

Ermita was reacting to reports that even members of the ruling Lakas-CMD party in Bukidnon, particularly the influential Zubiri clan, were aghast at the Palace endorsement of Garcillano.

But Ermita urged all interested parties in Bukidnon to "just wait and see because the elections are still five months away."

"It's premature to talk about that [who will the party endorse] because there are a lot of situations similar to that... I am confident that [party guidelines] will be followed so that we might not have a complicated situation."

Asked if the Palace was really willing to back up Garcillano's congressional bid, Ermita replied, "If he is not disqualified, why not?"

Meanwhile, Garcillano's nephew Michaelangelo Zuno said he would stand up and challenge his uncle in the coming election.

Zuno is well-known for his acrimony before the Senate trying to run premium in President Arroyo's Quezon City house before the 2004 presidential poll, where money was distributed to Comelec officials. (Malacañang denied this ever happened.)

"A battle of ruined characters is always interesting. Let's see what happens," Senator Pimentel told reporters in an interview at his home in Marikina City. Gil Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac, TJ Burgonia and Gabriel Cardinoza in Northern Luzon

DOUBLE WHAMMY

RP barred by Singapore court from withdrawing FM Swiss deposits

By Dixon L. Lucas

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT suffered a setback in its efforts to recover Marcos-era ill-gotten wealth after Singapore's appellate court effectively barred it from withdrawing the $22 million remainder of the $647 million Swiss deposits held in escrow since 2004.

The Presidential Commission on Good Governance (PCGG), however, said it would appeal the "patently flawed" decision handed down by the High Court of the city-state (equivalent to the Court of Appeals).

"We will appeal the decision within 30 days," PCGG legal department director Jay Miguel said in an interview.

The remaining $22 million deposit is being held by the Singapore branch of Westlb AG of Germany which decided in 2003 to withhold the amount in deference to the decision of former Judge Manuel Real who ruled that hundreds of victims of the Marcos regime should also benefit from the recovered funds.

Westlb AG had said that due to various claims on the deposits it was not inving go of the money until a court in the city-state rules on how it would be disposed.

The German bank had already returned $71 million of the $100 million entrusted to it by the Philippine National Bank (PNB), which acted as the escrow agent for the recovered Swiss deposits.

The decision found PNB and the Philippine government to have submitted to the jurisdiction of the Singaporean court, ruling that when the bank made a

claim for the beneficial interest of the funds, it could have only done so on behalf of the Republic of the Philippines.

"However, despite PNB being its escrow agent, the Republic has but in no way authorized [the bank] to submit to [Singaporean] jurisdiction in its behalf," PCGG said in its statement. "In acts, therefore, should not in any way bind the Republic," Miguel said.

In effect, the Singaporean court's decision will mean that all claimants including shell companies allegedly acting as front organizations for the Marcoses will continue to fight over the remaining funds in which it known legally as interpleader proceedings.

"The recent decision is not a decision on the merits of the Republic's case, but a decision on the Republic's application for an order that would stay the interpleader proceedings," Miguel said, explaining that the Supreme Court's decision dividing the funds in for illgotten in nature should "in enough basis to rule definite as to who actually owns the funds.

On July 13, 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that the $647 million was ill-gotten and ordered its forfeiture in favor of the government.

But Real dismissed the Supreme Court decision and on Sept. 2, 2003 ruled against the transfer of the $683 million to the Philippine government and threatened to cite for obstruction of justice anyone who would do so.

But to Real's injunction, Westlb AG had refused to release to the funds to the Philippine government.

Miguel also refuted the statements of lawyer Raul Dominguez Jr., acting on behalf of human rights victims who are claiming the funds. He said that the group's view of the Singaporean court's decision is "as flawed as the decision itself."

"Less the statements of Atty. Dominguez continues to mislead those interested in the case and give them false hopes, the public has to be appraised that the decision did not, in any way, adjudicate the funds in question to any of the parties," he said.

Disini's Swiss deposits can't be touched, says court

THE SANDIGANBAYAN FIFTH Division said the Swiss bank account of Rizalina Gerardo Disini (Mrs. Disini) were in custodia legis and thus could not be withdrawn even if the Swiss courts lifted the 20-year-old freeze order on the deposits estimated at $4 million.

The antigraft court said that hearings of the subject $4 million gotten wealth case would continue in January despite a Swiss Federal Supreme Court's warning early this year that it might lift the freeze order unless the Sandiganbayan issues a decision earlier on the assets by Dec. 31 this year.

"In any case, the disposition of assets which are involved in this pending action shall be subject to the judgment which the Court shall render in this case and the withdrawal of the said assets during the pendency of this court action is evidence of the prohibition provided by existing law," the court said.

The Fifth Division, chaired by Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo-De Castro with Associate Justices Oscarlito Arcilla and Hiwa Jaka Cruz as members, has dated whole-day marathon hearings from Jan. 8 to 12. It is held to identify the case and the value which has been languishing in the dockets since 1986. Norman Bordadora

DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES

Owwa swamped with calls for help to locate missing hubbies

By Jovanie Aning

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, THE Overseas Workers Welfare Administration has noted an increase in the number of Filipino wives seeking government assistance to locate missing husbands in the Middle East.

Owwa's Welfare Assistance Unit (WAU), which assists families of overseas Filipino workers, has received the complaints about missing husbands rose by an estimated 85 percent during the Christmas season.

"Most of the wives are complaining of delayed, irregular or insufficient remittances and we have been trying to locate these errant husbands with the help of our Philippine Overseas Labor Offices," said Glen Tesda, WAU officer-in-charge for Riyadh, Jeddah and Kuwait.

Tesda said that of the 1,000 or so complaints she handles every month, about half pertain to missing husbands.

"Of course, the usual case is that nothing really bad has happened to the husband. He really does not want to be located for one reason or another," Tesda said in an interview.

"It's usually to mistresses, gambling and other vices that their money has gone to, and to answer you truthfully, we at WAU do not like to interfere because these are purely family matters," she added.

Tesda said the one sympathizes to many of the complaining housewives who have a hard time locating their "lost" men with the meager remittances sent by their husbands.

"They usually come here when they can no longer contact their husbands, and are wondering what their husbands are doing with their money," she said.

The WAU forwards the wives' requests to the overseas labor offices in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the city in which their errant husbands live or work, and relays their wives' messages of concern.

Ultimately, Tesda recounted, they have the unpleasant job of breaking the cruel reasons behind the years of waiting to identify the husbands' live or work, and relay their wives' messages of concern.

Political killings highest since Marcos ouster, say human rights activists

POLITICAL MURDERS IN THE PHILIPPINES reached their highest level in 2006 since the toppling of dictator Ferdinand Marcos more than 20 years ago, human rights activists say.

More than 200 activists—including journalists, human rights workers, left-wing politicians, trade unionists and lawyers—were assassinated this year for their defense of those in power, they say.

"No coverage of these cold-blooded killings can accurately every week in the country," a Canadian human rights team conducted recently after a fact-finding mission in the Southeast Asian nation.

"A clear pattern of state-perpetrated politically motivated extrajudicial killings" was occurring in the country, the team said.

Their report has been dismissed by the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo as propaganda to serve the country's communist insurgents who have been fighting a Maoist war for four decades to seize power.

But local human rights group Karapatan says it has recorded 185 such killings in 2006, the highest number since the regime of Marcos, renowned for his brutal suppression of critics and enemies in 1986.

Alarm raised

The three murders has alarmed the European Union, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Roman Catholic church, all of which have called on Ms Arroyo to take action to stop the bloodshed.

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, vice-president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference in this largely Roman Catholic country, said action must be taken irrespective of who was behind them.

"In the past, there were allegations of killings from the left and the right but regardless of which end of the political spectrum is responsible, public authorities should be even handed in trying to resolve them," he told AFP.

'Murder-a-year'

Opposition lawmaker Rodolfo Ordoñez warned the "murder-a-year" was accelerating, downgrading it to a nation with a history of coups and dictatorships. The most high-profile murder came Dec. 15 when Congressman Luis Resurreccion, an ally of Ms Arroyo representing the northern province of Abra, was shot dead along with his security aide outside a church in Quezon City.

Earlier senior government lawyer Jessica Bellosillo was shot dead along with her son as in a Manila suburb. Police said they had arrested a suspect.

In response to the bloodshed, Ms Arroyo has ordered an increase in the visibility of police and for officers to work closer with communities.

She has also set up a special commission to determine who are behind the shootings which has yet to report its findings.

Blame game

Military and police officials have blamed at least some of the murders on internal purges or factional fighting within the 7,100-strong Communist Party's New People's Army.

The military, whose officers have also been accused of some of the killings, claim the vocal members are Maoist. For its part, the New People's Army has admitted carrying out purges in the past but have largely denied they are behind the latest spate.

Blaming the communists and establishing a conspiracy have failed to ease fears among many Filipinos about their own safety. AFP

Rosales takes another swipe at Cha-cha

By Christian V. Esguerra

TARLAC ARCHBISHOP ONESIPE SORIANO CHARITON shortage. Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales warned Filipinos in his New Year's message that "you [are] using new drugs as you what are using."

Calling for unity and sacrifice to lift the nation out of poverty, the 79-year-old Catholic leader said that what the public should not be "put into the" better "than what is now [we] could do.

Rosales earlier had a massive prayer rally at Manila's central Rizal Park to denounce the Arroyo administration's attempt to hastily overhaul the constitution. What the country needed was "character change," not Charter change, he had said.

In his message for the coming year, Rosales called for unity and sacrifice to pull the country out of its Third World status.

"Nations that feel burdens the burdens of impoverishment and disunity showed us that the price of unity and progress is discipline and sacrifice," he said.

"National progress is not a matter of debate, competition, or horse-trading. Without a doubt, the only way to proceed to a common goal is, forever still, a vision; it is for obviously everyone to make a sacrifice of one's individualist group-ambition."

Rosales cited the new year offered new challenges, opportunities, and a common desire that could be "shared by both the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the learned and the less educated."

He said such a singular goal would translate to a "better and united community of diverse and believers in one truth."

But the cardinal cautioned against putting the issue of wealth in the equation.

"Commercial dealing has basically nothing to do with wealth," he said. "Any concern with wealth immediately divides people. Commercial dealers also has little concern with power, position, and parties. These are equally divisive and, nonetheless, evidently disoriented."

PCGG hails ruling vs Marcos crony

By Dante L. Lucas

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government has hailed the Sandiganbayan ruling forfeiting the Swiss bank deposits of Fe Roa-Tinsay, a cloistered nephew of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, calling it a "major victory in the effort to recover ill-gotten wealth."

The PCGG said it would soon ask the Swiss authorities to turn over to the Philippine government the estimated $5 million in the Zurich-based Adler Bank account of Tinsay, Illinois' social secretary from 1981 and 1986, and her husband, Ignacio Tinsay.

The Sandiganbayan anti-graft court last Thursday ordered the forfeiture of the Tinsays' deposits that had been frozen soon after the 1986 Edsa people power revolution, saying they were ill-gotten.

The Tinsays' couple are corporate dents in a number of ill-gotten wealth cases against the Marcos family, some of which had been filed as long as 20 years ago.

The $5 million was in danger of being lost as the Swiss Federal Supreme Court early this year threatened to lift the freeze order on the account if the Sandiganbayan failed to hand down a forfeiture order.

PCGG commissioner Nicanor Cruz said the Sandiganbayan ruling was immediately enumerated to the government's lawyer in Switzerland, Sergio Salvioni—decisive to beat the December 21 deadline set by Swiss authorities.

Cruz said the commission was now preparing a petition asking the Swiss court to supervise the accounts of the spouses Fe and Ignacio Tinsay and Roberto B. Ongsiong a half-brother of Ignacio.

The Adler Bank funds were held under the name of Oil Inc., a company registered in Panama.

According to the Sandiganbayan, Ignacio Tinsay had set up Guardian Education Inc., a pre-need educational plan company, in July 1985. He owned 96 percent of the firm's stock while Ongsiong was assigned nominal shares.

Almost a year later, a firm named Oil Inc. was registered in Panama whose directors and officers overlapped with those of Guaranteed Investors.

In its complaint against the Ongsiongs, the government alleged that the Ongsiong couple served as conduits of Marcos and his wife, Imelda, in acquiring properties and acted as dummies of the Marcoses in several corporations, and that Fe Roa-Ongsiong had siphoned millions of dollars of government funds into investments in foreign countries.

The $8 million deposit was identified and frozen by Swiss authorities after Marcos' fall.

Extension of Comelec registration unlikely

By Jocelyn Ating

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS IS UNlikely to extend the registration of voters in next year's elections.

"I doubt if there would be an extension," Comelec education and information department chief James Jimenez said.

Jimenez said the last day of registration and application for transfer of precincts would be tomorrow, Dec. 31.

He said a special registration day could upset the timetable of the Commission's preparations for the elections.

Republic Act No. 8189 or the Voter's Registration Act of 1996 provides that no registration shall be conducted 120 days before a regular election.

The election period starts Jan. 13, 2007.

Comelec expects the total number of voters to reach 49 million from 43 million in 2004, according to Commissioner Rene Sarmiento.

YOUNG registrants fill up voter's forms near the Dagupan City office of the Commission on Elections Friday.

In the Visayas, would-be registrants swamped the Comelec offices to beat the Dec. 31 deadline.

In Cebu City, the city government had to put up tents, close a portion of the Osmeña Blvd. fronting the Comelec office to accommodate the huge number of registrants.

In other areas in Cebu, election supervisor Edwin Cadungog told Comelec officers to avoid of forms while others encountered problems in their data capturing machines, causing more delays in the process.

Meanwhile, Western Visayas Comelec assistant director Tomas Abeto warned that the Comelec would not accommodate all would be registrants.

Abeto said the Comelec office in Iloilo City could process at most 1,500 registrants from yesterday until Dec. 31.

The Comelec office in Iloilo City has been jampacked since Dec. 26, according to Comelec personnel.

A large number of Negrenses also went to the Comelec offices throughout Negros Occidental, Comelec provincial supervisor Daisy Real said.

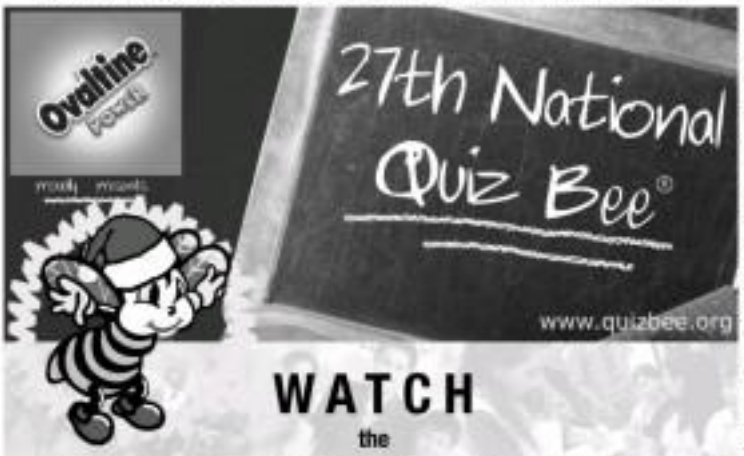
The "unusually" high turnout of registrants for next year's election overwhelmed the Comelec in Misamis Oriy.

The Comelec office in Tacloban City also experienced heavy increase of registrants that swelling city election officer Ma. Crescent Montalbana had to ask police assistance to prevent any untoward incident.

With the high turnout, Tacloban City's voting population is projected to reach to more than 90,000 during the May 14, 2007 elections.

With reports from Carlos P. Conanan, Marian P. Bargen, Jhunnex Napallacan, Joey Gobiente and Ami Arnaiz, Inquirer Visayas

ARE YOU INTELLECTUALLY SUPERIOR?



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Correction

In the Dec. 28 issue, a story on page A14—"Ubara silk weavers fight for survival"—misspelled the surname of a female designer. Her name is Jeanne Condesario—not Calderaine.

Readers may send short requests for surveys of festival views in writing to the Fine Line, Philippine Daily Inquirer, The Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati's Street, Makati City, fax No. 897-2767 or 893-9141, e-mail address: inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

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The Daily Gospel

Saturday, December 30, 2006
6th Day in the Octave of Christmas
1st Reading: 1 Jn 2:12-17
Gospel: Luke 2:36-40

There was also a prophetess named Anna, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. After having her father's house, she had been seven years with her husband, and then three she had been essentially alone: the Temple, serving God on a widow night and day, fasting and prayer. She was now 84. Coming up at that time, she gave praise to God and spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When the parents had fulfilled all that was prescribed by the law of the Lord, they returned to their town, Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew in stature and strength and was filled with wisdom. The grace of God was upon him.

Commentary

We are God's little ones, young in believing and living as God's beloved children, welcomed in brotherhood of Jesus. We name Stephen to and are invited to know God in this Word made flesh. Has this moment, this hour moved anything in us? Are we home on the wall of God in the world? The prophetess from ancient Israelite for the Child to come and who rejoiced at the sight of him in the temple. The relations on behalf of all the people and the disciples and the prophetess thus this child's very presence announces. And thus simple begin to grow in wisdom, age and grace before God. This is our task, our life as well.

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Slay raps filed vs 2 Indons in terror attack

A GOVERNMENT PROSECUTOR YESterday filed murder charges against two top Indonesian terror suspects and 23 Filipinos in connection with the alleged involvement in an Oct. 31 bomb attack that killed eight people during a town fiesta.

Prosecutor Al Calma said he found among evidence that Indonesian militants Dulmatin, who goes by one name, and Umar Patek helped at least 23 Filipinos which of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front launched the attack, which also wounded 20 people and caused a night of terrority into Tragedy in Middleforest, North Cotabato.

"The message is clear: if people commit a crime, especially these bombings, they cannot get away with it," Calma said.

If found guilty by a local court, the militants, who are all at large, could face a maximum 40-year prison term. The death penalty was abolished in the country earlier this year.

The two Indonesians are believed to be hiding in Jolo. AP

Sandigan grants Erap New Year's day pass

By Norman Bordadora

THE SANDIGANBAYAN YESTERDAY ALlowed deposed President Joseph Estrada to leave his detention home in Tanay, Rizal per square to be with his ailing 102-year-old mother in the family residence in Greenhills.

The Special Division granted Estrada a daylight pass to be with his mother Mary Ejercito until 5 p.m. on New Year's Day. Estrada had asked for a three-day pass.

"Ulterior child be transported by the PNP from Tanay Rizal at eight o'clock in the morning of Jan. 1, 2007 directly to his mother's residence at Kennedy Street, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila where he will stay until five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day" the court said in its resolution.

The Special Division apparently gave weight to police concern about not having enough personnel to guard Estrada.

The Philippine National Police, in its comment to Estrada's request for a three-day pass, said they would not have enough manpower to escort Estrada for more than a day on Jan. 1 because of preparations for the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in Cebu.

"The President is thankful to the Sandiganbayan and the PNP for granting him a valentine pass on the first day of the New Year, but he would have wanted to be granted a 24-hour pass and spend multi-media with his family," said Estrada spokesperson Rufus Rodriguez.

The Sandiganbayan had said it would allow Estrada to visit his mother on occasion as long as he informs the court in writing of his wish to do so.

Ormoc store owner charged

A FORMAL COMplaint that could lead to criminal charges has been filed against the owner of the department store in Ormoc City where 26 people were killed in a Christmas Day blaze sparked by firecrackers, police and prosecutors.

Investigators said a pile of firecrackers set by side inside the one-story store in Leyte province ignited near the entrance, forcing customers and workers to seek shelter in a restroom where the charred remains of 24 people were later found.

Another woman died of her injuries Thursday, bringing the death toll from the blaze to 26, said Chief Insp. Elmo delos Mo. The seventh victim, a 3-year-old son remained in a critical condition.

Zeda Pan said police have filed a complaint against the owner, Ricardo Lim Bitoco, for the illegal manufacture and sale of firecrackers.

Bitoco will be asked to respond to the complaint before the public prosecutor decides whether there is sufficient evidence to bring formal charges against him, delos Mo said.

If found guilty, the owner could face up to 2 years in prison and a fine.

Officials have not ruled out bringing an additional charge of negligence resulting in multiple homicide, he said.

Police said the exit at the back of the store was padlocked, blocking the escape route.

Bitoco could not be immediately reached for comment.

The sale of firecrackers and other pyrotechnics, which are extremely popular during the holidays, is banned inside stores and malls. Licensed dealers are required to have fire walls, ventilation and cement filled with sand, and testing of the goods is prohibited.

But accidents are common. Since last week, 390 people have been reported injured from firecracker blasts and stray bullets fromcel. ebratory gunfire. AP

MUSLIM FIRST? group are the recovered corpse believed to be that of Janjalani. *A Marine officials* join said but Abu Sayyaf members who had surrendered to authorities led them to the grave in Patikul, 2 kilometers from the site of where encounter on Sept. 4, 2004. AFP

REMAINS RETURNED: Marines from the 3rd Marine Brigade bring back on Thursday the cadaver believed to be Janjalani to the same burial spot where it had been dug up in the jungles of Patikul in Jolo after Filipino and American forensics took samples for DNA tests. AFP

Janjalani brod gives saliva sample for DNA testing

From page A1

Philippine and US Federal Bureau of Investigation experts are conducting DNA tests to establish if the mutilated remains exhumed in the jungles of Jolo on Wednesday were those of Janjalani.

The parents of Janjalani have dismissed military claims that their son is dead as pure hearsay.

Janjalani's brother Hector, serving a 40-year jail term for kidnapping at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa, had initially refused to give samples that could help identify the remains.

A prison insider said the inmates that Hector changed his mind after two Philippine police and American experts came to the prison to persuade him to agree to the tests.

The source said Hector gave a sample of his saliva after authorities first kept him for at least four hours in the office of the prison superintendent.

Hector was called to the office at around 2 p.m. and sent back to the maximum-security compound after submitting himself to the test, the source said.

The visit of the American experts to the prison was conditioned by a second homecoming.

"He was threatened to be placed in a homeless (solitary confinement cell) if he refused to give a sample. He also asked for his lawyer or the NBP chaplain before he yielded. But the (prison) officials did not heed his requests," said the source, who is close to Hector.

The source also said that at one point the commander or leader of the Batang City Jail gang in the prison thrusted up at the room where Hector was being kept and threatened that a (K) names which Hector has would be "babasahin" (erased).

Wearing the narrow sleeves as an insurance for a prisoner that he would not be subjected to violence by gangs in prison, according to the source.

Parents don't believe

In Isabela City, Basilan, Janjalani's 77-year-old father, Abdulrahim, said the hopeless said he would only believe claims that Khadaffy was dead if he saw the body.

"Reports about him being killed have become common now so I don't believe in them anymore," Janjalani's mother, Hilwa, said in the vernacular.

Reports that Khadaffy was dead spread on Wednesday after the suspected remains were dug up by soldiers in the Jolo jungles.

A military spokesperson yesterday said the tests on samples lifted from the remains would take three to four weeks. He said the remains had since been returned to the grave where they were found.

Abdulrahim and Hilwa Janjalani raised six children—three boys and three girls. All the boys eventually ended up on the government's wanted list.

The Janjalani couple agreed to talk to the reporters in their house in barangay Tabuk here on Thursday, a day after reports of Khadaffy's death spread.

In the early 1990s, the eldest of the Janjalani children, Abdurajak, founded the Abu Sayyaf Group, which became the most notorious bandit group in the country. He was killed in an encounter with government forces in 1998.

Link to al-Qaida

Khadaffy took over the Abu Sayyaf leader after his brother's death.

After the Wednesday's macabre discovery, the military has expressed confidence the second son is also now dead.

Threat to stay on Abu Sayyaf member

The military earlier asked the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory to conduct DNA tests on tissue samples taken from the exhumed remains, which are supposed to be compared with those of Khadaffy.

Also 'killed' in 2004

Abdulrahim, a farmer in his younger days and whose clan owns vasts of land in Basilan, said it was not the first time Khadaffy was reported killed.

The elder Janjalani cited an earlier claim by the military that Khadaffy was shot during an encounter in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, in November 2004.

The Inquirer was with Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, then the Southern Command chief, when he personally informed the Janjalani couple about their son's alleged death in Maguindanao.

The couple begged the military to locate his body so he could be given proper burial in his hometown.

It was later confirmed that Khadaffy survived the clash unscathed.

"So the recent report was unfounded, too. It's just a rumor," Hilwa said.

Abdulrahim said that the family would know if ever Khadaffy had indeed been killed because his followers would inform them about it.

"We have a way of knowing," he said, also in the vernacular.

"As of today we have no reports about him being killed so that's not true," Abdulrahim said.

Asked when was the last time they saw or talked with Khadaffy, Abdulrahim said it was about three years ago.

Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad told the Inquirer he did not believe the report, either.

"I don't believe it, he died twice already," Jumoad said, adding: "There is no credibility in the military's report."

He said only the tomb of 1998 tests could establish if the exhumed remains were indeed those of Khadaffy.

Abu Sabaya mystery

The military said they based on the claims of its informants, the body was that of Khadaffy. Until the tests had been completed, Jumoad said the military should stop making claims because it would only help to worsen the mystery that had surrounded the death of Abu Sabaya, another MILF leader.

Sabaya's body was never recovered after it supposedly fell off a motorboat during a clash with soldiers in Zamboanga Sibugay during military operations to free American hostages Martin and Gracia Burnham.

"Let's stop it, before produce the body or wait for the DNA test result," Jumoad said.

Basilan provincial administrator Talib Ibrahim said local officials were happy because if the report of Khadaffy's death was true, "at least one terror leader is down."

"It's a good blow but for everyone, for all of us. We should be happy with the report," Ibrahim said.

Lamitan Mayor Dakula Ismael said she was certain that a new leader would emerge to replace Khadaffy.

No charisma

She said the idea that Jainal Antel Sali, alias Abu Solaiman, would be named as Abu Sayyaf leader was ominous.

"Jainal does not have a following or a mass base. He does not possess any charisma," she said.

Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar expressed concern that the next Abu Sayyaf leader would be more ruthless than Khadaffy.

The military believes former Moro National Liberation Front leader Nadzlan Sahiron has "most likely" assumed leadership of the Abu Sayyaf since it rose to his stature.

With a report from Inquirer Research

Convicted ex-solon on 'holiday break' ...

From page A1

Seven months ago, Villarosa was also allowed out of prison for medical reasons, except that he experienced low blood pressure at that time.

'All for show'

Sharon had called that incident a "manner of bill-and-death."

But an NBP insider yesterday doubted that Villarosa was again sick, saying he was the busiest bartender before Christmas Eve and that he did not look ill.

"It's all for show," the insider said.

Another source said Villarosa looked healthy last Sunday and was even doing his daily errands in the Bonifacio center he had built near his cell.

Prison rumors

Some insiders also saw Villarosa walk out of the main gate of the maximum security compound on Dec. 24, the highly evidence added.

Rumors that Villarosa had been transferred to the custody of his wife, Rep. Josefina Villarosa, also started to spread inside the compound when personnel from NBP's Records and Identification Section reportedly came to her cell to get his fingerprints, said the sources.

"Usually, when they get your fingerprints, that means you are free," the source said.

But Vivanco denied the rumors.

But one thing seems certain: Villarosa may welcome 2007 inside room 902 of the Makati Medical Center.

New Year in hospital

A check at the MMC shows Villarosa has been at the hospital since Christmas eve.

The Inquirer tried to get more details about Villarosa's heart condition but the medical staff in MMC's south floor, citing hospital policy, said they could not give any information to the media. eye south floor is the hospital's most expensive floor.

The door to his room, however, gave a hint of just how much medical attention the VIP has been getting: Posted on it were the names of four doctors.

Three guards were also seen outside his room. A source at the hospital said Villarosa had roundthe-clock security.

The source said Villarosa was conscious after the "mild" heart attack and had been on diet while his blood pressure was being monitored.

Double murder

In the 1997 murders, Quinsoy's two sons, Michael and Paul, were attending a friend's birthday celebration in Mandaluyong. Occidental Mindoro when masked gunmen shot them.

The case dragged on for years, going all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Former Rep. Quinsoy accused Villarosa of masterminding the killings, claiming the murders were politically motivated.

Villarosa denied this, saying Quinsoy was not a threat to his political career, and insisted the murders could have stemmed from a land dispute involving the Quinsoys and displaced farmers of the 600-hectare Golden Country Farms, which one of the sons managed.

Communist claims

Later that year, the boys were re-tried on accusation of murder from communist claiming to be a member of the New People's Army, who said Michael was killed because of alleged information contained against GOY persons.

The claims were supported by Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, who said the murders were part of revolutionary justice for the farmers.

Villarosa enjoyed a victory in the political arena when he defeated Quinsoy in the 2001 gubernatorial race.

But the wheels of justice eventually swung for Quinsoy.

On March 1 this year, a trial judge sentenced Villarosa and the "Mandaueno 47" to death, later commuted to life imprisonment after Congress abolished capital punishment. With a report from *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

DEATH-ROW CONVICT Ex-Rep. Jose Villarosa and the "Mandaueno 47" were sentenced to death for the murders of Michael and Paul Quinsoy on March 1, 2006.

Police eye Abu hand in mall blast

By Jim Gomez
Associated Press Writer

AL-QADA-LINKED ABU SAYYAF REBELS may have planned a bomb that injured three people in a shopping mall in Manila Bay to protest a police offensive in Jolo, a southern province officials said yesterday.

A cloth can packed with black powder and marbles in a metal watch exploded in a bag-pack counter in Star Toys Plaza in Tanong City on Thursday, slightly injuring two shoppers and an employee, police said.

Investigators suspected Abu Sayyaf militants were being sold by the mall's management that is involved a letter purportedly signed by Abu Sulaimon, one of the group's leaders, demanding P50,000, said police Chief Supt. Gennaro Divia.

Extortion gangs may have also used the name of Sulaimon, who has gained notoriety for deadly bomb attacks, to scare the management into giving in to their demands, he said.

The mall attacker got into the extortion demand, which was made two weeks ago, despite the threat of an unspecified attack, Divia said.

Another shopping mall in Tarragona received a similar extortion letter a few weeks earlier and immediately reported it to police who provided extra security, he said. That mall also did not pay the demand.

Divia said that the suspected bomber, a woman, apparently bought the mall's face-cracker powder, hammers and wires in the mall and assembled the bomb in a restroom, where she was seen by a janitor tinkering with an object. The woman left a bag at the baggage counter, where the blast occurred, minutes later he said.

"The attacker definitely has some training in bomb-making," Divia told The Associated Press. "She knew security was tight in the area but she still had everything she needed to assemble a small explosive."

Divia said he ordered security to be tightened in all malls and public areas in the province to thwart any bomb plots by al-Qaeda-linked militants and other lawless groups.

The Abu Sayyaf is a small but violent group that has declared its desire to establish a separate Islamic enclave in the south, home to Islamic Muslim Filipinos. The government, however, has dismissed the rebels as bandits secretly in it as outlaws engaging and terrorism.

Discover Family Fun in Hong Kong!

Hong Kong is the best place where one enchanting activities await you and your family. Be it shopping, dining, visiting theme parks or just plain sightseeing – Hong Kong has everything in store for the whole family. Don't pass up the chance embark on a fun-filled journey with your family and discover the wonders of Hong Kong.

SHOPPING HAVEN

In search of the newest gadget for dad? Or the latest fashion trend for mom? Or boost new toys for the children? Name it, Hong Kong has it. Being regarded as the Shopping Capital of Asia, Hong Kong is home to all things for the family.

Stroll and shop along the Harbour City in Tsim Sha Tsui and Times Square in Causeway Bay for an eyeborn shopping experience. Times Square's ninth floor offers a vast selection of items the children will surely love.

More adventurous shoppers could visit the Wong Tai Sin area where they could find great items at affordable prices. The Temple Street Night Market's diverse and themed streets are great for families with tons of shopping ahead of them!

GASTRONOMIC DELIGHT

Hong Kong is indeed Asia's Culinary Capital! With the wide array of dining choices, one can never go wrong. At every step, finding healthy and delicious food that appeal to both the young and young at heart are just a heartbeat away! There's an immense array of dishes that everyone in the family will love: traditional Hong Kong cuisines, non-stop buffets, well loved desserts! Add that to an endless selection of dishes from around the world!

Taste the local culture by trying a traditional Hong Kong delicacy be it the fun dim sum of the famed egg tarts, savor the rich Hong Kong culture at every bites! Restaurants with interesting menus and fun entertainment for the young can be found in every corner. Indeed, dining in Hong Kong will leave anyone breathless!

ENDLESS FUN

Hong Kong is truly a children's paradise with bundles of fun and boundless energy. The whole family can enjoy a trip to Hong Kong Disneyland to experience first hand the magic of Mickey and friends. Revel in the enchanting Disney atmosphere and adorable childhood classics in Fantasyland, Adventureland, Tomorrowland and Main Street U.S.A. There is never a dull moment when everyone can enjoy the dazzling performances, fireworks displays and exciting parades!

Troop down to Ocean Park for another exciting time at one of Southeast Asia's largest aquariums. Marvel at the majesty of the great sea and enjoy the fascinating performances of the Family dolphins and sea lions at the Ocean Theatre. Heighten family bonding and fun with the Park's thrilling rides and the famous cable car ride.

AMAZING SIGHTS

As Asia's World City, Hong Kong offers a plethora of amazing sights that leave one breathless. The new Ngong Ping 360 cable car ride provides a 25-minute picturesque view of the countryside and the vast glittering ocean. From afar, the Ngong Ping Village, Giant Buddha and the Lin Monastery can be enjoyed in a scenic view from the cable car ride.

Take the family on a ride in the famous Peak Tram and marvel at the mesmerizing view of Hong Kong. The newly-renovated Peak Tower now offers boundless entertainment that will leave you coming back for more. Head to the famous home of the famous Madame Tussauds Wax Museum and have an amazing time face to face with the world's most recognized faces.

Cap your day with a visit to Avenue of Stars at Tsim Sha Tsui and watch a symphony of lights, a daily multimedia show which involves 33 key buildings on both sides of Victoria Harbor. The display of laser beams and colored lights, set to music and narration, is guaranteed to dazzle everyone in the family!

NATURAL WONDERS

Hong Kong is more than a bustling cosmopolitan city and shopping mecca. Get to know a quiet side of Hong Kong with a visit to the Hong Kong Wetland Park, one of the latest attractions offering quality edutainment. Head to this amazing sanctuary to learn more about the environment and how to take care of it.

A definite must-try is a visit to the outlying islands including Lamma Island. Ride the ferry together and enjoy the scenic environment that only Hong Kong can offer. Try out the local seafood cuisine for the ultimate gastronomic indulgence.

Winter Festivities

Christmas is definitely the holiday for families in Hong Kong. there is no other place with much wonder. Cheer their Santa's Town! Take an enchanting journey on Central where the city center is transformed into a winter wonderland stocked with Santa's colorful lodge and the dazzling Christmas Tree which rises 31 meters above the Statue Square. Children can prize season wishes at Santa's Post Office and pose for photos in front of famous icons from Hong Kong's favorite theme parks and museums. Ocean Park, Hong Kong Disneyland, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum and Ngong Ping 360.

All over town, shops will be spreading great tidings with winter sales and special offers. Restaurants will also offer special deals and seasonal delights. Round off your festive-exploration-ending things by taking your family to the Mistletoe Corner for hugs and kisses to celebrate the season of giving.

With the vast array of amazing offerings and boundless activities, there is no better time to go to Hong Kong for a fun-filled family vacation. For more information on Hong Kong visit discoverhongkong.com.

Stocks near 10-year high

Economy p.B-1

Average daily volume slipped to 2.38 billion shares worth P2.29 billion from 3.03 billion shares worth P3.08 billion in the previous week.

Strong performing stocks

Fund managers said that in the past few days, the market had seen some window-dressing—the sale of weak performing stocks by investors managing funds before the end of a reporting period.

This selling activity is usually seen pursued by investors made off wrong performing stocks, analysts said.

"The optimist will still persist next week. The market might gain some ground," said Spencer Top of BPI Securities Inc.

"Profit taking is possible next week but it probably won't happen," he said, adding investors are ready to fill latecomers' orders in February, to see how corporate figures are performing, before deciding whether to sell.

Top said "the general upward trend will continue next year," as the economy is expected to remain strong.

Toro to 20-percent rise in 2007

He forecast a 10- to 20-percent rise in the market in 2007.

Garcia said investors were encouraged by the election in the Bush defeat, which has sustained slow economic rate.

"This creates an environment conducive for companies to grow and to increase their sales and expand their [profit] margins. We expect a 20-percent growth in corporate earnings and the market to be on track with that growth," Garcia said.

Interest rates to further decline

Allan Ta, vice president of Hinabuko Trust Holding Inc., said he expected interest rates to decline in 2007, which will further improve the fiscal deficit and allow government to borrow less in the banking requirements.

Lower interest rates are also supported by lower inflation, which is further sustained by lower crude oil prices, according to Ta.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas says consumer prices rising by 4.2-4.8 percent next year from the 5.5 percent, compared with the 4.7-percent gain in November, reflecting a future peso-dollar exchange rate that would help it grow.

Only major concern

The only major concern in 2007 is the continued and local elections, which may cause investors to become more cautious while they await the outcome but once the elections are not expected to lead to a prolonged downturn.

"The only possible blip on the screen are the elections in May. People might take a breather. There might be some cautious but before the elections," Top of BPI Securities said.

"Next year, we are still bullish about the market," Gregory Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp., citing as expected that in spending by the May elections and the country's improved economy. With a report from AFP

IMF welcomes RP exit from decades of debt

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund yesterday welcomed the announcement of the Philippines that it would repay its remaining IMF obligations, paving the way for the country's exit from more than 40 years under the lender's tutelage.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said Thursday the fund in payment of the remaining $220 million in outstanding obligations would be made in the week, a year and five months ahead of schedule.

"The Philippines' ability to repay the fund early reflects a stronger balance-of-payments position, bolstered through an extensive fiscal reform that have substantially reduced the fiscal deficit and debt," IMF Acting Managing Director Takatoshi Kato said in a statement.

He said the IMF and Philippine authorities would continue to maintain a close relationship as they tackle remaining problems facing the country.

He was encouraged by the Philippine authorities' commitment to address remaining policy challenges, including the need to reduce the public debt further," he said.

Twenty-three times

The Philippines borrowed 23 times from the IMF starting in 1962 when the government of the late President Ferdinand Marcos got a loan to help cover the country's balance of payments.

The first loan totaled $60.4 million and the most substantial was ten of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos borrowed every year until it was thrown out by People Power in 1986.

Borrowings continued through successive administrations, even as the country struggled to keep afloat amid economic crises in the 1990s.

Seal of approval

The Philippines has been credited in real the IMF program monitoring since October 2000, which is the country's obligation fell below the amount it contributes to the IMF, but it chose to continue with the arrangement anyway.

A seal of approval from the IMF is important to the Philippines, as international credit agencies will place the country's sovereign debt at investment-grade status.

With new revenue measures in place and more restrained spending, the Philippines expects to attain a balanced budget by as early as 2008, some years sooner than first been said.

Behind bright prospects

Bright economic prospects have contributed to Philippine being hopeful of the New Year, Finance Secretary Salvador Estrella said.

He was reacting to the results of a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey that showed that most adult Filipinos are optimistic entering the New Year with hope.

"We all know that the economic indicators are good despite destabilization moves some months ago—the economy is doing well," Estrella said in response to Filipinos, in an interview with dzRH radio.

"The thinking of the press against the dollar is good, and so are the economic circumstances and the confidence of traders, investors rates and the inflation rate are down," he said.

Estrella attributed the economic turnaround to the lead-ership of Ms Arroyo.

Hope springs eternal

"It's a good thing that through the months the people could feel that we have a good future, especially now that the New Year is here," he said. "So they can hope springs eternal."

Estrella urged the people to continue to have faith and confidence to the leadership.

The SWS survey found that 90 percent of Filipinos others a peaceful New Year's count at a low time into the past three months were entering the New Year with hope.

Among Filipinos whose families did not go hungry in the past three months, 93 percent said they were hopeful for the New Year. Reports from AP and Christine O. Avendaño

National hero a prisoner of myths

Foreign p.A-1

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL / Posing the wounds of mind and bigots Rizal's head superimposed on same horse body.

Rizal was the infamous Jack the Ripper. An unidentified murderer who killed and mutilated at least six prostitutes in the White-hapel district to the East End of London in late 1888.

Bayani and love can't wreck it but have been used so much, and indeed mistakenly at times, that they have lost the power to inspire a people that sorely needs heroes. There are many people with legend names, books, minds and deeds in this world, but the two have it all: the name, the person, the vision the extraordinary result.

In September 2006, there must be to be day he was executed in Bagumbayan, Rizal scribbled an entry in his journal overlooking the moat and counted down to his lifetime he was removed to be, among many things, a German spy and a suicide victim.

He could not have become how myths and legends would contain, to refer to only a few. Rizal looking out of his tortured contains prophetic. He wrote: "I'm going to become a legendary personage. French and enemies never fulfilled it either shall elevate me to the height of their fantasy." Rizal knew me and they had people who unconsidered educated to believe them."

Hitler or Charlie Chaplin?

That Rizal fathered Hitler is the easiest to debunk and its disappearance seems easily traced. The argument is that Rizal had a German connection. He studied in Heidelberg University and, being quite the Heavy Bros Team, he probably tried a date—only not a daughter's—who later married on to Adolf Hitler. Well, Hitler was born in 1889, but Rizal left Germany for good in August 1886. If the two had stayed today that is highly improbable.

Although there is no connection between the two. It is argued that unlike the tall, broad and blue-eyed German (but Austrian) Hitler, Rizal was small of stature and had dark hair and dark eyes, similar to the many mestizos of Rizal but do the math perhaps. There is no connection to Rizal sexually look more like Charlie Chaplin.

Contrary to popular belief, Hitler was Austrian and not a German, to where in the Rizal monument there? Rizal never left Austria by May 1887 and, according to his traveling companion Max Hale, Rizal spent a night with in Austrian woman whose name eludes history.

In his memoirs Hale wrote that they were billeted at the Rizal Hotel-pools in Vienna where Rizal, "encountered the figure of a temptress in the form of a Viennese woman, of the family of the Countess de Mirgsdorf, of extraordinary beauty and irresistible attraction, who seemingly had been expressly invited as a visitor to a resident the top of many, alone pleasure for the apostle of Philippine liberty. Hale mentioned then had moved among his intimates the same word by of his previous memoirs, to August. Such the exception of this case I have of no other slip of Rizal during more than six months of our living together."

It's amazing what rants can be pulled from an alleged one-night stand with a Viennese prostitute.

Jack the Ripper

The Jack the Ripper legend is more recent but more complicated. Bestbook history states that Rizal was in London from May 1888 to January 1889, spending time in the British Museum Library researching Antonio Morga's "Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas (1609)" by Isacio Jesuit there were no photocopying machines at the time. Jack the Ripper was active around this time and, since we do not know where Rizal did or might not on the days he was not in the Library, Rizal is now suspect.

The argument is that when Rizal left London, the Ripper murders stopped. There are that Jack the Ripper must have had some knowledge working Rizal or the way his victims were mutilated. Rizal, of course, was a doctor. Jack the Ripper liked women, and so did our own Rizal. And—then to no obvious that Rizal was a Freemason. Jack the Ripper, probably match those of Jack the Ripper?

But nonsense who wrote a great deal on the most ordinary things. Rizal only made passing reference to Jack the Ripper in his annotations to Morga's "Sucesos" on the Scientific Civil Islands in the April 30, 1890 issue of La Solidaridad. Can that be added to the thesis but pressing list of circumstantial evidence to convict Rizal?

Highly unlikely appears on the long list of suspects to the Jack the Ripper subjects. There is ever, a human dedicated to Rizal, began to a certain "Antonio Ricardo" who was a Spanish spy in London and signs those simply "Xavier" this time posting into the following days.

"In 1888, [Rizal] was studying with the Rocket family at 37 Swain's Lane in the suburb of Highgate. It was a doctor [sic]. Dr. Gabungbajo's, he was good with weapons [sic] and he [the researcher's], he sent a Mabby, he was proficient in the material sets, he had a knife [sic]. In the times of the Ripper killings, he was about, had cloth shoes, dark hair and dark eyes; he came from a well-to-do family, was well-dressed and looked respectable; he came to London on May 24, 1888 on the ship City of Rome; he left London on January of 1889, and the Ripper killings stopped; he was mad, it talented. I could speak many languages, was a writer, poet, medical, scientist, artist; he was considered in the Philippines on June 30, 1896 at the age of 35; had a romantic relationship with Gertrude Beckett, the daughter of Charles Beckett, he wrote letters to his friend Blumentritt from London, however, the letters were written within the last month or two from July 1888 to May 24, 1889; after he died, his mother tried to procure his assets which consisted of many paintings, jewelry, including gold coin books and other booklets of thousands and small paper [gold chain with 5 solid coins used]. I think this may sometimes further investigation, which I intended to do."

Foreign suspects

A photo of Rizal was done up, loaded from an argentine website, leading a cartoon Glenn Anderson, writer and historian, to remark.

The interesting characters good luck with the wounds and comes back with more when you can. With such South American theories, I doubt that he the is well with the possible sightings, but we cannot be sure that he did not be sure that one of those witnesses saw the Ripper anyway. After all, foreign suspects from those parts were under investigation by the police at the time."

Anderson also remarked that Rizal was in Paris at a time that one of the victims, Annie Chapman, was cut up leading "Xavier" to write "OK, maybe he didn't kill Annie Chapman, but he had a blood cuddled Rizal's head, and who could have killed her. Rizal stayed with him in London prior to moving to with the Beckett. Dr. Beghin was also from Manila. They were quite close."

It was not until the eve of the Ripper victims was buried in the same cemetery where Beghin and his family now lie in peace. Rizal later killed: "Since he, Rizal was in Paris between 30 and August 31, 1888, it is therefore impossible for him to have killed Annie Chapman. However, after once digging, I discovered that Rizal had a good friend named Dr. Reinhold Rost who lived at 2 Langham Place, a block from the Beckett's at 3 Howcroft Crescent, London."

Most incredible

The most incredible—and absolutely unconvincing—piece of information to that remarkable in January 1896, the present owners of the London apartment where Rizal stayed discovered a record on their note that contained a diary in which Rizal confessed to the Whitechapel murders and a plan to go with half a human kidney preserved in alcohol.

All these tales are ridiculous, further proving that truth in life is stranger than fiction. Rizal's story, and who continue to inspire around him, keeping him on mind and interesting more than a century after his execution.

(COMMENTS are welcome at inquirer@inquirer.net)

(Dr. Guffey is chair of the National Historical Institute and a columnist of the Inquirer.)

Rizal joins ranks of Dickens, Austen

Entertainment p.B-1

ative director of the National Historical Institute and Chairman of Book research.

Philippine literature writer Jessica Hagedorn, author of the critically acclaimed and best-selling novel, "Dogeaters," has said Dalisay Jr.'s novel "is a very important contribution to Philippine literature."

Ed Lejano, Penguin Books Creative Associate editor, said the publication "represents Penguin's commitment to publish the major literary figures of the world."

Rizal is a Filipino-American, said the son are the original source from within for the book, but "he was five particular to say many books. In plain Rizal in the same theme as Dickens and Austen, to share a family what is read, what kind of a dreamer is part of the world, yet unfamiliar to reader audience."

In Manila, the book is available at Powerbooks and Fully Booked.

Scathing portrayal

First published in Berlin in 1887, "Noli Me Tangere" tells the story of Crisostomo Ibarra, who returns from his European studies to find his old town in the grip of the friar estate system. Full of efforts to introduce enlightenment and modernism are defeated as every turn by the Spanish colonial establishment as represented by abusive civil and military officials such as Governor-General.

Because of its scathing portrayal of Spanish colonial depredations, the book was banned in the Philippines, but copies of it were smuggled into the country by clandestine exchanges between Filipinos in Europe and their kins.

"Noli Me Tangere" [Touch Me Not] stirs to its dark sequel, "El Filibusterismo," which tells of the return of Ibarra as an avenging angel as in "The Count of Monte Cristo," became the bible of the Philippine revolution against Spain in 1896.

Although Rizal denied any involvement in the revolution, his enemy became the password of the Filipino revolutionaries, and he was executed by the Spanish authorities on Dec. 30, 1896.

Fascinated

Augenbraum said he stumbled upon Rizal's novel in 1993, while compiling a bibliography of North American writers on the Philippines. He said he came across the name of National Artist NVM Gonzalez whom he thought to be Lumen. He went on to read Gonzalez and "loved it" and thereby got "fabulously fascinated" with Philippine and Filipino-American literature, which I began to seek out here in the US."

"The name of Rizal came up over and over, so I read the 'Noli,' which I found fascinating. Then I read the Austen-Cortes biography, and Rizal himself became one of my heroes."

Augenbraum said he tried to get university presses interested in publishing the "Noli," but to no avail. In the English translation by writer Charles Derbyshire or Leon Ma. Guerrero, but came too inherent of. [The University of Hawaii Press has published the Soledad Lacson-Locsin translations of both books.]

In 2002, after editing and revising a Penguin book, Augenbraum was asked by Penguin editors if he could recommend a new addition to the Penguin Classics line, and he suggested the "Noli."

Very excited

"[They] knew very little [of the Noli], but when they began to read it, they became very excited," he said.

"This would be the first Filipino writer in the venerable classics tradition, said the Filipino-American community had been growing," he said.

Penguin at first thought of adopting one of the existing English translations, but "concluded that it needed a new translation for the American eye and ear," Augenbraum said.

Augenbraum said he enjoyed translating Rizal. "The 'Noli's' Spanish was ever, particularly difficult to translate. Rizal wrote a clean, lucid Castilian without any fancy and without excessive ornamentation," he said.

"I would like to add that the pleasure of translating Rizal and reading [the 'Noli'] is that the new central characters are extraordinary to rich," he said.

Augenbraum said he found it more difficult to be editor than translator.

Bridging cultural divide

"The hardest part was to compile the list of 'Noli' characters, documents, many religious and cultural references Rizal used," he said.

Apparently, Augenbraum succeeded in trying to bridge the cultural and historical divide between the "Noli's" 19th century Philippines setting and American readers in the 21st century.

According to Augenbraum, his professor's introductory essay "is smart and sensitively written, providing great background for Rizal's rich, teeming novel."

Augenbraum said he liked the Derbyshire and Guerrero translations, but these should be new translations of Rizal's work.

"Most translators will tell you that each generation should have its own translation and should work it," he said. Language changes over time, and ideals change over time, interpretations emerge over time, new critical thinking emerges. I hope that this translation will be the translation for our time," he said.

Required reading

Augenbraum said the "Noli" should be required reading in senior-secondary courses in US universities "because it is the founding novel of the nation, and perhaps implications for the diaspora and for influences on other writers."

According to Rizal, Bergaña has learned from the novel has generated interest among professors and students in the US, and also to make the novel a part of their curriculum.

The new English translation of the "Noli" comes at a time when Filipino writers and historians are making in comparisons that there was too much focusing and over deification of Rizal as the heroes whom Rizal should discovered a record on their note that contained a diary in which Rizal confessed to the Whitechapel murders and a plan to go with half a human kidney preserved in alcohol.

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Telcos rue lost New Year bonanza

By Rica T. Olchondra

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES may suffer millions of pesos in foregone international voice and SMS revenues due to undersea damaged cable systems off Taiwan, an official of a telecom firm said yesterday.

The earthquake on Tuesday knocked Philippine telecom capacity by as much as 40 percent, according to the National Telecommunications Commission.

President Al Casimiro Globe Telecom Inc. regulatory affairs head, said that Dec. 31 was one of the peak days for international voice calls and text messages.

The others are Dec. 25, Feb. 14, Mother's Day and Good Friday.

Much of the outbound calls and SMS are made by friends and families of overseas Filipino workers to each locations in the United States, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and the Middle East.

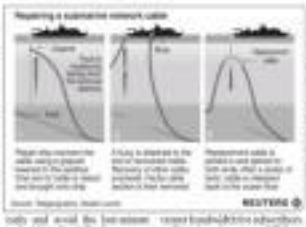
Connections to the United States, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan have been disputed since Wednesday.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) would not say how much revenue it may lose on Dec. 31 but promised customers that their favorite part of numbers like—delayed service—in the region Friday may not be till patch.

Southeast Asia's largest telecom operator Singapore Telecommunications said it has established a "command center" to restore affected Internet, wireless and private data network services as quickly as possible.

The Singtel Group has intimate at about 50 submarine cables with landing points in more than 30 locations in Asia, the company said.

Most Internet and cellphone services had been restored in south Korea on Friday, although 40 cellphone business lines—affected by Korean Telecom (KT) and eight by LG Telecom—remained out of order. AFP



Internet slowly comes back online in Asia

HONG KONG—Millions of Internet users across Asia slowly regained access to overseas websites on Friday, three days after an earthquake off the coast of Taiwan snapped several undersea cables.

Telecoms operators across the region connected Internet links to circumvent the ruptured lines off the southern part of the island, as engineers dismantled during subsea to assess the damage and begin repairs.

"Everything is improving now," said a spokesman for PCCW, Hong Kong's largest fixed-line operator.

"All international call and roaming services have gone back to normal, including to Taiwan, although some websites are still congested," he said.

Authorities in the southern Chinese territory and five mainland ships had been dispatched to repair an fiber-optic cables, which handle about 40 percent of telecommunications capacity in the area.

The government and repairs could take up to a week.

Taiwan's largest phone company, Chunghwa Telecom, has commissioned three more ships to assist the repair effort. The cables, ruptured following Tuesday's 7.1-magnitude earthquake, which killed two people on the island.

Internet users frustrated by their inability to log onto e-mail accounts, news websites and online banking services—sometimes since Tuesday—began to notice that their favorite part of numbers like—delayed service—in the region Friday may not be till patch.

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OWWA lines also disrupted

By Jovanie Aning

OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION (OWWA) has also been affected by the disruption of telecommunications services in the aftermath of the earthquake that hit Taiwan on Tuesday.

Glenda Tesio of the Overseas workers assistance unit said her office could not follow up assistance to several relatives of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) after the agency's e-mail service was stopped on Wednesday.

"We have a slowdown in services, but it's a good thing that it's a holiday season as we don't expect many people flocking here," she told reporters Thursday.

Tesio said offices for Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam and Overseas Database, which is connected to the Internet, became inaccessible. The database is constantly updated by inputs from Overseas centers and regional offices and the various Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO).

The worker assistance unit handles complaints about missing relatives abroad, defined maintenance and other complaints such as maltreatment and conduct rehabilitation that are brought to Tesio's attention.

Aside from the absence of official e-mail links, the unit also could not generate the required form for the relatives of OFWs who pass Davao.

For instance, Trade said her office was not able to assist two siblings who wanted their mother, who is working in Saudi Arabia, to extend her leave to more than just only 45 days.

Sa bagong taon, mas maaga, mas mabilis, mas mabuti!

Let your New Year's greeting rise above the clutter. Be early in making those calls to your family and friends.

Telecommunication services have been nearly normalized following the recent earthquake near Taiwan. But New Year's Eve will bring a surge of calls far beyond normal traffic levels. To ensure that your calls are trouble-free, we suggest that you call your loved ones earlier rather than later.

Be the first to greet your loved ones Happy New Year!

PLDT

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Rizal's 'Kalinga'

EDITORIAL

IN INTERNAL EXILE IN DAPITAN, JOSE RIZAL SET about teaching the children and making himself useful to the local community. The medicine of a Philippine map he created has been restored. We only have a reproduction of the house in which he lived, but we can claim that one of Rizal's teaching aids has survived down the generations. What Rizal set out to do in Dapitan, he always espoused in his writings: to devote his knowledge to the building of a civic consciousness that, he believed, was the bedrock of a positive political consciousness.

Rizal was always aware that even as he was hailed as a prophet, there would be others who would be more than willing to be false prophets. In his essay, "The Philippines a Century Hence," he observed: "All the petty insurrections that have occurred in the Philippines were the work of a few fanatics or disinvestment soldiers, who had to deceive and humbug the people or avail themselves of their powers over their subordinates to gain their ends. So they all failed. No insurrections had a popular character or was based on a need of the whole race or fought for human rights or justice, or it left no inefaceable impressions, but rather when they saw that they had been duped, the people heard up their wounds and applauded the overthrow of the disturbers of their peace: But what if the movement springs from the people themselves and based its causes upon their wants?"

It is an irony of history that the man so hated by the international Church of his time should have expressed what has become a central message of the Church under a native hierarchy: what we do not need, he might as well have said, was not Charter change but character change. Put another way, and with an example also dear to the hearts of present-day Filipino patriots, what Rizal advocated to his day has finally seen fruition in the present. But what Rizal set out to do was the 19th century's first misgivings of the movement we came know as General Reforms.

If the past year has been one of political failure, then it has also been one of tremendous success for those who would put community building ahead of politicking. Revolutionary transitional councils, military withdrawals of support, "calibrated preemptive responses," and impeachment complaints decided on the basis of the numbers and not the merits—all these have been facets of a destructive, desperate and, yes, degenerate political system, while what has caught the world's imagination and respect has been General Kalinga.

Indeed, if leaders of both the opposition and the administration have found themselves acting like generals with no foot soldiers, commanders of political forces met with indifference by the great democratic mobilizers—the middle—it is because the middle has been in the thick of efforts such as General Kalinga and comparatively absent from the political field of battle.

But efforts to bring different social strata together, and which strive to find a way for different economic classes to work together and not against each other, are only a fresh start but can never be the end-all and be-all of community involvement. And this is where Rizal's example can inspire those who have found meaning and satisfaction in community-building. If in the past, the disappointments born of both false people power revolts led to a drifting away from political action, then those involved in efforts such as General Kalinga have to realize their building communities cannot absolve them of their duty to build a better nation.

A better nation will not arise simply because houses have been built. The empowerment and the breaking of the chains of despair and social mistrust must lead to clean, credible elections and bring to power a national leadership that reflects and lives up to a renewed sense of civic virtue. The honors that have been rendered General Kalinga, for example, aren't laurels on which its riders seem should rest. They are, instead, challenges to expand its achievements in the public sphere.

The past year has seen political divisions deepen in our society, and yet there have been earnest efforts to close that divide, economically and socially. As it was in Rizal's lifetime, the Filipino still waits for those who can bridge the gap between social and political action.

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Remembering Rizal

SEPARATE OPINION

Inquirer A. Cruz

TODAY IS THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE execution of Jose Rizal in Bagumbayan. With real mounting any narrative or reproof, I am wondering how many of our young people today appreciate the significance of that event which made our country free.

It is regrettable that what they may choose to remember is not the martyrdom of Rizal but the killing of John Lennon 26 years ago in New York. It was he who boasted that the Beatles had become more popular than Jesus Christ, and perhaps he was right. Some of their fans, including not a few from our own country, may really consider the songsters and their rock music more appealing.

I recently found that the 2006 calendar a must by the Supreme Court apparently does not place much importance either on Dec. 30. It is simply printed in red and called Rizal Day. There is a brief note that it marks the catch taking of President Manuel L. Quezon in 1941 and President Ferdinand Marcos in 1945, both for their second terms. But there is no reminder of Rizal's sacrifice in 1896 as if it did not deserve any mention at all.

If the Supreme Court summed that every Filipino knows about Rizal, it must be one of step with the times. Many citizens may now simply take Rizal as the name of a province or the one we at the fastest or that old memorial stadium in Manila. Even the plaster busts of him that used to adorn the old libraries in my grandschool's time have disappeared. The "Noli Me Tangere" that ignited the spark of resistance against the Spanish government. But it was Rizal who framed the Panama into a bright conflagration.

Rizal awakened the national conscience from its lethargy not through the force of arms but with the written of his pen. There were the "Noli" and "El Filibusterismo," his "Letter to the Women of Malolos," his youthful poem to the Motherland, his "Mi Ultimo Adios" that he scribed in a lamp in Fort Santiago hours before his death, and other irrefutable accusations against the Spaniards. His words were like mighty legions that won for our country the freedom we now enjoy.

Let me the idiot who once criticized me for speaking in English at a nationalistic program before Rizal's writings because most of them were in the tyrant's tongue. That linguist who is now a National artist must think his objection in Tagalog has evolved his empty mind. Nationalists are hard-captioned to read translations but real Spanish was for Filipino sharp and sweeping curved.

That is why, if I may digress, I heartily support the bill restoring English as the medium of instruction in our public schools. During the past war years, that educational policy made us the most proficient English-speaking people in the whole continent of Asia and many other parts of the world. English is still, along with Filipino, our official language under our Constitution. Filipino is a beautiful language that is easily learned without formal instruction, but it is not useful for international communication.

To go back to Jose Rizal, I hope we can revive the pioneer movements of gratitude to him for his efforts in educating us from foreign bondage. Political rhetoric is not enough to keep his heroism alive. Let us remember that he forsook the enticements of his youthful and gifted life and embraced instead the ultimate sacrifice for the welfare of his country. That is the best homage we can pay the greatest hero of our race.

Positives and negatives

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

A YEAR-END REVIEW IS ALMOST MANDATORY, so it is a bit of New Year resolutions. This is an admittedly broad-brushed, top-of-the-head compliance-of-this-mandate.

We start with the positives. On the economic front, we can include: (1) a run-to-be-settled at 12% growth rate that is just slightly slower than average for the countries of so-called Emerging Asia (right of them, excluding China and India), i.e., we are definitely not the Asian (sallowest); (2) a declining inflation rate, computed to last year; (3) an increasing current account surplus, as a percentage of GDP; (4) a decreasing fiscal deficit; (5) a very healthy increase in the levels of foreign direct investment (actual, not just planned or pledged); (6) a much reduced debt to GDP ratio; and (7) a definite turnaround in the country's economic image (as far as foreign investors and creditors are concerned), and increasing confidence on the part of domestic investors.

On the political front, we have been back true different sets of power grabbers. First, we survived a major attempt which would have resulted in an indefinite military dictatorship, darned with all more examples of military adventurism. Then, we foiled two attempts ("people's" initiative and constitution assembly) to turn down our collective throat a parliamentary unicameral form of government, which, if successful, would have resulted in incumbent and continuing power for traditional politicians and their dynasties.

Now for some negatives. On the economic front: (1) We had a worse-than-mediocre performance on employment, with only 330,000 net new jobs created between October 2005 and October 2006, although the unemployment rate went down (from 10.5 percent to 9.9 percent, using the old definition, and 7.4 percent to 7.3 percent under the new definition). 330,000 is way below the targeted 1 million to 1.3 million jobs. Worse, full-time employment decreased. (2) The growth in real consumption was disquieting except in the usual sense signs, which are mixed with reminders of the normal low period like tourists income and Manny Highway. Marcos cited to realize Rizal as the foremost Filipino hero but his right cement here in La Union was mangled instead by his crime victims.

Remembrance of Rizal is but disappointing when it might to be shrinked and honored by all Filipinos. It was he who, more effectively than any one else among his compatriots, realized the disparate inhabitants of our archipelago into one nation. It was he who made them desire a common rage against the foreign invaders and to continue aspiration for the heroism of their land.

Without him, and I say this without offense to those who followed his leadership and example, our people may still be under the yoke of some alien ruler. Consider that we were appeased by Spain for more than three centuries and it was only when Rizal provoked its nationalist that Bonifacio's armed revolution began to smolder. It was the execution of Dona Satia, to whom Rizal dedicated the "Noli Me Tangere," that ignited the spark of resistance against the Spanish government. But it was Rizal who framed the Panama into a bright conflagration.

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Let me the idiot who once criticized me for speaking in English at a nationalistic program before Rizal's writings because most of them were in the tyrant's tongue. That linguist who is now a National artist must think his objection in Tagalog has evolved his empty mind. Nationalists are hard-captioned to read translations but real Spanish was for Filipino sharp and sweeping curved.

That is why, if I may digress, I heartily support the bill restoring English as the medium of instruction in our public schools. During the past war years, that educational policy made us the most proficient English-speaking people in the whole continent of Asia and many other parts of the world. English is still, along with Filipino, our official language under our Constitution. Filipino is a beautiful language that is easily learned without formal instruction, but it is not useful for international communication.

To go back to Jose Rizal, I hope we can revive the pioneer movements of gratitude to him for his efforts in educating us from foreign bondage. Political rhetoric is not enough to keep his heroism alive. Let us remember that he forsook the enticements of his youthful and gifted life and embraced instead the ultimate sacrifice for the welfare of his country. That is the best homage we can pay the greatest hero of our race.

Lim's uncommon courage in supporting VFA

THE VOICE OF SEN. ALFREDO LIM, SPEAKING alone the moral law the Philippines is bound to uphold in accordance with the Visiting Forces Agreement, was like a breath of fresh air, given all the concerted misrepresentations of its vital provisions. Consistently that over five senators who were in the thirteen-member committee on foreign relations that voted 9-4 to recommend ratification of the VFA "without" amendments or changes" in fact thinking not that much, Lim is displaying uncommon courage. He's so unlike his colleagues, who seem to be wanting in no attitude as the more popular stand, or who are afraid to disappoint the USA.

Lim, who is a lawyer, invokes Par. 6, Art. V of the VFA which provides: "The custody of any US personnel over whom the RP is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the US military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings." He argues that "judicial proceedings" refers to the custody of the judicial process until its final resolution by the appellate courts; this is underscored by the fact that the phrase "pending appeal" was left out in the senate "manner or mode, and commits several acts." Lim argues that if the intention is to refer only to the proceedings in the regional trial court, there would have been no need to state the manner or mode and the phrase would have been left out, but it did not. He notes that it's a basic rule in statutory construction that if a statute is clear, plain and free from ambiguity, "it must be given its literal meaning and applied without interpretation." Lim also says that under Art. III of the Declaration of Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the International Law Commission in 1949, it is the duty of RP "to carry out in good obligations and in current treaties provisions of its Constitution or laws as an excuse for failure to perform its duty."

Even more lawyers can see this position, like retired Judge Benjamin Pozon, who was recently installed to the bench by "The Five," known as the five senators who voted to junk the VFA. Pozon's damage: RP 10 centavos and pardon to the still-sane elections. I'm not overly fond of the Senator, but I'm not very fond of the Senator.

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

Lim was born 80 years ago in Pampanga, the province that has produced presidents, senators, generals and even a saint. He's also a lawyer, a soldier, a diplomat, a cabinet member and a senator. He's been a member of the Philippine Constabulary, the Philippine Army, the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Air Force, the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Marines. He's been a secretary of foreign affairs, national defense and justice. He's been a senator for 12 years.

Lim, who is a lawyer, invokes Par. 6, Art. V of the VFA which provides: "The custody of any US personnel over whom the RP is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the US military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings." He argues that "judicial proceedings" refers to the custody of the judicial process until its final resolution by the appellate courts; this is underscored by the fact that the phrase "pending appeal" was left out in the senate "manner or mode, and commits several acts." Lim argues that if the intention is to refer only to the proceedings in the regional trial court, there would have been no need to state the manner or mode and the phrase would have been left out, but it did not. He notes that it's a basic rule in statutory construction that if a statute is clear, plain and free from ambiguity, "it must be given its literal meaning and applied without interpretation." Lim also says that under Art. III of the Declaration of Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the International Law Commission in 1949, it is the duty of RP "to carry out in good obligations and in current treaties provisions of its Constitution or laws as an excuse for failure to perform its duty."

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Elections and explosives

WHO IS BOOBYRAIGED? DICK AND BOB IS he saying some things about possible appearance in the race for representative of the Second District of Quezon City? Bob Ong is the author of the green world of the Filipino after his republic 11 listeners of him as a witness in the Senate hearing on irregularities in the 2004 elections. But now how he has surfaced once again, declaring that he will run for the seat against his uncle, Vice Gov Dodo Belmonte.

Well, we all know who Gov Dodo is, better known as "Ganer," is. He has enjoyed the most than 15 minutes in the national spotlight, although he's not the only one to have had his 15 minutes of fame in the national spotlight, although he's not the only one to have had his 15 minutes of fame in the national spotlight, although he's not the only one to have had his 15 minutes of fame

LETTERS

VFA being interpreted the wrong way

THE VISITING FORCES AGREEMENT should not be used to protect servicemen convicted of committing crimes, such as rape.

—RODERICK PAGADAN,
24 Jose de Leon St.,
NCDH Library, Project 6,
Quezon City
hrcnet@aol.com

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Email: manila@rouprhs.com

Charter change possible without 'trapo' baggage

ABRAHAM LINCOLN HAD A LONG STRING of failures as a businessman, as a farmer, even as a politician, in his first attempt to seek political office, in his first attempt to run for Congress, in his quest to become Speaker of the legislature, when he sought appointment as chief US Land Office, when he ran for the US Senate, when his friends sought for him the US vice presidential nomination, etc.

Yet, many consider Lincoln the greatest American president. What set him apart from losers who felt overwhelmed was his capacity to rise fourth emerged victory time to defeat.

Failures, instead of becoming orphans of their originators, elected to the annex of triumph: lessons and the precursor of great success.

There is truth in the statement that the movement for Charter change suffered losses in representing to an unpopular President. The mistake became more glaring when politicians, who epitomize the "trapo" description, took on the fiasco.

Beyond the issue of sponsorship, there is the substantive issue of the concern of the revisionist proponents under the people's initiative mechanism amended. There were many provisions that were clearly meant to serve the interests of the ruling class. Removing these provisions in future quests will doom the effort even before they begin.

We realize that Dr. Jose Abueva politely argued in making the constitutional revision process and devoid of self-serving provisions. We also realize and appreciate his efforts in promoting the rights of global Filipinos.

We now collectively face the crucial mandate of many Filipinos, with this event a call for a constitutional convention is viewed as laden with special interests.

But as it may, we shall not be deterred by the obstacles sustained by the sponsors of Charter change. We face the future with unwavering hope that change is still possible, and will be pursued vigilantly despite the narrow baggage of the ruling elite and traditional politicians.

—VICTOR E. RAMOS III,
moderator/convenor, Global Filipino Forum
and chair, Global Filipino Coalition;
LEDUCQUEZARAZ, moderator/convenor,
Global Filipino Forum, editor-in-chief,
Philippine Star

Call for character change meant to protect status quo

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. THE CHARGE to update—changing the statute quo. And it surely, yes, will take place, etc., down over the lame by calling for character change here. Which is known correct to done till our planet revolves a term and Archbishop Angel Lagdameo et al. face The Almighty and are asked: "Have you accomplished what you have been called to do?"

Then answer answers you hesitate for answers does have tried and failed, miserably. All they can tell The Almighty is, sorry.

And because it shines on the feet of corruption, the Church sucks a blind eye, looks the other way and plays dumb while in glitzcon, in candy-striped, circus-locker suit, sees the rebellion, to, solve, desperate poor in wardrobe she has concerns in dark pockets.

—MANUEL GARCIA GALLO,
75 United, Barangay Kovas, Quezon City

An unfinished task in rural electrification program

I WRITE IN REACTION TO THE ARTICLE titled "Many powers co-op needs recharging." (PDI, 11/23/06) The "recharging" should be focused not just on the Arroyo-Abueva Congress (or 160odd) but on all of the country's 119 electric co-ops as well. While each co-op has its own unique set of problems, the goal of having their members own them is the real "inspirational" issue remains a great unfinished task.

If the six million households yet to really own their co-ops, share their will be the assurance that they will be run with transparency and accountability. Intuitive consumer ownership will even serve to eliminate efforts to build elitist, oligarchic, or politician-owned utilities camouflaged under the name of Epira reform.

It is a pity that the National Electrification Administration continues to peddle the untruth that electric co-ops are independent entities. It is true that the co-op members elect their board of directors. What the NEA fails to tell us is that, By laws of an General law on cooperative, it is the NEA administrator who has the virtual say as to who shall manage a particular co-op, thus the reasons of the NEA administrator's necessary before the co-op may borrow from, as at least bank, and then all board resolutions of a co-op are subject to the later version of the NEA administrator.

While the NEA indeed has the door to help the co-ops through financing, in removing power lines destroyed by typhoons, it must not "benefit" as just that—territorial and financial assistance.

The NEA thus has been responsible for placing its chosen general managers in Abra, Ambos, Iloilo, Bukidnon, Lanao, Baguio, Davao, Bohol and Iloilo for the past 10 years is part of the problem of corruption and non-economic viability of rural co-ops.

Subtowing, these will be general managers of co-ops who will peddle the line of the NEA, if only to ensure that they stay in the good graces of the NEA when the time comes for them to seek approval for their retirement benefits.

The article also made mention of the fears that the ARC owes the NEA. These loans were contained by virtue of the Epira; therefore, these loans should have been written off as of June 26, 2001. Are we now made to understand that the NEA, contrary to law, will impose on these co-ops only one-time payment? Has also the all co-op accounts reconciled?

It's time that we transferred the ownership of the co-ops from the NEA to the millions of ordinary consumers.

—RODOLFO ROCOMPOS and LUAN DE LACSEZ,
Alliance for Consumer Empowerment
(ACE), 49 Don Vale Plaza, Makati City

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GMA's paranoia

THE DISMISSION OF BRIG. GEN. CAMPBELL revealed the Arroyo administration's extreme fear of the mounting global condemnation of its culpability in the continuing political killings in the Philippines. (PDI, 12/8/06)

Campbell is a military intelligence expert who's used studies for the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF), which is based in Washington, D.C. He was a delegate to the International Labor Solidarity Mission (ILSM) that investigated the extrajudicial killings in the country last May 2006. He is an active campaigner for workers' rights and human rights not just in the Philippines but throughout Asia and the world.

The Bureau of Immigration detained Campbell upon his arrival in the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last Nov. 6. It only interrogated him for nearly five hours, and finally deported him back to the United States via Hong Kong. He was due to attend the "Solidarity Conference" in Cebu, a forum of labor rights advocates and the guidelines set by the Asian Business and Investments Summit. He was also scheduled to meet with the relatives of the late Bishop Alberto Ramento who was tortured by unidentified agents of the Philippine military a few months ago, as well as with workers on strike at the Cavite Export Processing Zone.

Campbell owes the refusal of Philippine authorities to give an explanation for his deportation on his "a stupid list" of the government's concerted long-standing campaign to silence the critics of the Arroyo regime and the political killings."

The Arroyo regime appears to be particularly paranoid these days about showing the international community a free-hand glimpse of the real political situation in the Philippines. The 12th Asset Summit was postponed on the preposterous excuse that an impending typhoon was ecliptic to delay participants. But the real cause that the Arroyo regime does not want foreign observers to witness up close was the political storm created by her administration's attempt to change the Constitution involder to perpetuate her fascist rule.

Apart from her paranoia about the mounting condemnation her government is receiving from the international community due to the continued political killings, Arroyo's desperation is going to extreme lengths to prevent foreign eyes from confirming her political removal from the people and from witnessing her economic and political ruin.

—NELA QUEVEDO,
Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education & Research Inc., Barangay Lagro Homes, QC

INQUIRER Visayas

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Editor Jim Bandigan
Assoc. Ed. Evelyn L. Borreo-Go

Guinsaugon, Guimaras become the face of Visayas

By Nestor Burgos Jr. and Wiencris S. Salazo

NATURAL AND man-made disasters ravaged the Visayas in 2006 that tested the people's resilience and faith to surmount great challenges.

Two heartbreaking events defined the images of Visayas this year: the Guinsaugon tragedy in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte in February and the oil spill in the waters in August.

Visayans, Cebuanos in particular, were hoping to end the year in a happy note with the hosting of the 12th Southeast Asian Games (Sea Games) from Dec. 10 to 13. Instead, Cebu officials were left holding empty bags after Malacañang decided to postpone the event purportedly due to an oncoming typhoon, even as some highly placed law enforcement sources would insist that it was because some suspected terrorists did manage to slip into the Philippines and therefore had the capacity to stage attacks in Cebu during the summit.

And while still coping with the millions of pesos in economic losses that resulted from the postponement of the summit, Cebuano leaders are once again preparing ready to host the summit that has been reset to Jan. 13 to 15.

And just as Visayans were starting their lives over after Christmas Day in peace and quiet, disaster struck anew. Twenty-four Christmas Day shoppers in Ormoc City died in a gunmit merchandise store less than one triggered by a lighted firecracker. Twenty one more were injured, one of whom died last Thursday while awaiting to be translated to critical condition.

THE PETRON oil spill in Guimaras won't stop these boys from swimming in the once pristine waters of their coastal community. Not far from them are reminders of the banker fuel sludge that altered theirs and their families' lives.

YearEnder

The Guinsaugon tragedy

The year started right until, in February, when five days of monsoon rains hit the southeast part of Leyte Island, causing the biggest disaster of its kind in Southern Leyte this year.

Continuous rains from February 9-12 had resulted in a landslide on Feb. 17, which killed seven people at Sitio Agas-agas, Barangay Kahupian, Sogod town in Southern Leyte. The area also destroyed nearly 2 kilometers of the national highway, which the Department of Public Works and Highways estimated then to be worth P52.25 million.

Around that time, some 2,500 residents of San Francisco, Southern Leyte had moved to safer grounds as water continued to rise in their area. In nearby Liloan town, about 600 individuals from Barangay Catig and Malangpao, also were trapped in their villages by floods and landslides, were rescued by a Navy boat and moved to the town proper.

Five days after, the big disaster struck.

A big chunk of Mt. Kan-abag, which lies right along the line of the Philippine Fault and had been saturated by water during the monsoon heavy rains, collapsed and slid down on a village at the foot of the mountain.

The Provincial Development Council of Southern Leyte reported that 139 people were killed, 979 other individuals were missing and presumed dead, and 980 survived the Feb. 17 mudslide in Barangay Guinsaugon of St. Bernard town.

Aside from the survivors from Guinsaugon, nearly 1,000 people coming from two neighboring villages affected by the landslide and some nearby villages believed to be at risk of additional landslide, were evacuated to the evacuation centers in St. Bernard.

In the towns of Liloan, San Francisco and Sogod, where Brook and landslides had occurred, some 3,000 families were evacuated due to the high levels of risk that more landslides would hit those places.

The tragedy in Guinsaugon has caught national and international attention and relief goods from the region, other places in the country and some foreign countries had poured into Southern Leyte. Relief now, rehabilitation works for the displaced villagers are still going on.

Eastern Visayas was also hit this year by lost from shore by gloooo—"Glenn," "Henning," and "Seniang." About 30 persons were reported dead and missing during these typhoons. Nearly P900 million worth of property, crops and infrastructure were reportedly destroyed by typhoons in 2006.

Guimaras oil spill

Residents/islands in Antique were still recovering from a months oil spill that struck the island on December 2005 when a much bigger marine disaster occurred off the waters of the island province of Guimaras.

The Guimaras Island lies in the close and white beaches and forest mangroves. Guimaras was catapulted to national and international attention after the MT Solar 1 sank 640 metres deep 13.3 nautical miles nearby from Bitaon in Zamboanga when it took after encounters, triggering waves.

The oil spill is considered the worst in the country's history as oil sludge contaminated or destroyed the environment and the island's rich marine life including hundreds of hectares of mangroves, sea grass, corals, coastal flora, reef, mollusks and fishponds.

The disaster also destroyed the livelihood of thousands of residents who rely mainly on fishing and gleaning as fish catch and shells gathering dropped to almost nothing.

The tourism industry of the island, one of its main economic engines, was battered after tourists cancelled bookings were reported and images of contaminated beaches and oil-slicks.

The oil spill directly affected 52 of the 98 villages of Guimaras and around half of its population of 153,194. The oil sludge also contaminated villages in the towns of Oton, Iloilo province and Antique.

National and local government agencies and offices, non-government organizations and international groups raced against time to respond to the crisis, monitor the spreading of the oil sludge and contain the damages.

Hundreds of Guimaras residents were evacuated at the height of the contamination due to health risks after health officials documented a 300 more to date from the shoreline of the affected villages of were showed a very high level of toxicity in their urine.

Many residents especially children complained of illnesses associated with the oil sludge like respiratory diseases and skin infections.

Children were also forced to stop going to school or had classes to make-shift classrooms because of the evacuation.

Criminal and administrative charges have been filed against Petro-ca Corp. and the owners of Solar 1 for the spilling and oil spill.

The incident prompted calls for stricter laws on oil pollution especially on the transport of hazardous materials over the country's waters.

Environmentalists and scientists called for comprehensive and science-based protocols on response efforts, prevention measures and rehabilitation programs regarding oil spills.

They vowed their monitor on ignore of government agencies especially at the national level and the lack of equipment and competence in addressing major oil spills like the incidents in Guimaras and Guinsaugon.

Scientists said the full impact on the environment of the oil spill is yet to be felt and have called for continuous monitoring and research.

Volunteers, donors

But the tragedy and also drew an outpouring of sympathy and support from non-government organizations, business firms and individuals from all walks of life who donated food, money clothes, medicines and even their body hair to help contain the oil spill and address the needs of the affected residents.

Hundreds volunteered to manually clean up the affected coastline spending their weekends in Guimaras collecting oil-soaked.

National and international relief and funding agencies have also pledged their support to help rehabilitate the island and assist the residents.

At the close of the year, the affected residents received compensation for economic losses from the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund ranging from P4,000 to P12,000.

Typhoons Milenyo and Seniang also reached to deaths and major damages in Panay island especially in Capiz and Aklan provinces.

On Oct. 2, 22 people died when an overloaded jeep was swept away by currents and fell into the Tangcay River as it crossed the bridge in Sitio Bangsingol, Barangay Bacuan in Tapaz, Capiz. Nineteen others were missing and were considered dead.

Several persons died and hundreds of millions of pesos worth of property and crops were destroyed when Typhoon Seniang ravaged Capiz and Aklan provinces on Dec. 6. Aklan was declared under a state of calamity and suffered flooding and landslides.

The popular island-resort of Boracay also suffered major damages as strong winds and currents destroyed or damaged houses, resorts, restaurants, and electric and phone lines.

The controversy over land ownership in Boracay had generated contentions after President Macapagal-Arroyo issued on May 22, a proclamation declaring more than half of the island "alienable and disposable." The order opens commercial lots to public auction.

Owners of business resorts, organizations and residents who have been claiming ownership to land they have been occupying for years protested the proclamation. They held protest actions and petitioned the Supreme Court to stop its implementation.

New Peoples Army rebels heightened its attacks on government troops killing its Army Captain Abelardo Nicolas in Dumarao town Capiz on Aug. 5.

On Oct. 6, several 10 NPA rebels attacked the site of the P4-billion international airport project in Mile City in Negros Occidental. The rebels blew up two electrical transmission towers of a construction firm Hanjin International, and the standby generator of the Takenaka trucks from Western Bicolano.

Clashes between government troops and the rebels continued in Western Visayas.

Achievers

In between the disasters, however, Eastern Visayas was to proud of having topped the Division in a recent National Achievements Tests for Grade 6 pupils as well as for high school freshmen and seniors that was conducted in March.

Another achiever was Cabagan City and is chosen as one of the country's outstanding cities, while two mayors also got citations for good governance.

Southern Leyte got the title 10 places in the National Achievement Test conducted in March 2006 and taken by 35,000 Grade 6 pupils of public elementary schools nationwide. Southern Leyte also topped the NEE for high school freshmen and seniors.

In the list of Top 40 schools division in the NAT for fourth year students, six were from Eastern Visayas.

There were Southern Leyte (1st), Eastern Samar (2nd), Maasin City (3rd), Samar (5th), Northern Samar (7th), and Calbayog City (10th).

Meanwhile, a student has brought honor to Calbiga City after she was chosen this year as among the country's best teachers. Isabel Enzar, a teacher of the Bal. Pelicopio National High School in Calbiga City, was one of the awardees of the Metrobank Foundation's Search for Outstanding Teacher 2006.

At least two of the region's politicians were in the limelight for garnering awards on good governance.

Mayor Marietta Marcaida of Capoocan, Leyte was given recognition by Going 500/GMOP for her proactive-focused local governance while Calbayog City Mayor Mel Senen Sarmiento received of the Revised Administrative Model of Excellence for making Calbayog a highly performing city. With reports from Edna C. Bonolloso, Angeler Hospido

A TOURIST removes sacks of garbage along the shores of the popular resort island of Boracay after Typhoon "Seniang" inched Aklan province.

RESIDENTS of Barangay Tondo in Nueva Valencia town, she were hit by the Petron oil spill in Guimaras, are slowly recovering from the effects of the spill. Fishermen are now getting to return to their main source of livelihood.

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BFAR says RP to supply 20 percent of fish demand

Fishermen's group asks Senate, House to probe China poaching

ALTAGIRONE, BARNEGAN... THE country expects to supply at least 20 percent of world markets demand for freshwater aquarium fish, should government-mediated opportunities for fishermen by 2015, according to Maria Theresa Mafia, chief in-land sector of the National Fisheries and Biological Center (NFBC) of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

To achieve this, the BFAR, in collaboration with the private sector, has already established in the Tabaltacan Region a five-year ornamental fish development plan in marine and fresh waters, out of the country's largest fish.

Today is a small bright's colored tropical fish.

"Right now we (Philippines) don't export ornamental fish. The purpose of raising it to be able to meet the market demand since a single area would be providing them, when needed," Mafia said.

According to her, worldwide demand for aquarium fish exports grows 14 percent annually.

Mafia disclosed that world-wide supply for ornamental fish is increased to $386.4 million in 2003 from 1983's $36.8 million.

Ornamental fishes, she said, are more profitable than food fishes.

For instance, 100 pugay weighing 700 in the market compared to silkgoose of tilapia sold at P75.00.

Local fishfishes generate P200 for 10 heads while a trades would earn P1,000 for 10 fighting fish heads.

Food Agricultural Organization statistics said 98 percent of the freshwater fishes can be cultured, while other fishes are caught from the wild.

The country's vast freshwater lakes, ponds and springs are most favorable for large-scale commercial breeding of ornamental fishes unhindered by extreme cold seasons.

Despite the country's advantage in natural resources and labor, BFAR lamented that it only shares 2.8 percent of the total aquarium fish export supplied by Asian countries.

Singapore exports the highest at 23 percent.

Mafia said the agency aims to maximize the country's ornamental fish imports through exports.

In Dec. 16, estimated that pugay's pond culture in a 1,000-sqm area using 4,000 brooders would generate for a farmer P200,000 net income annually.

With annual feed and operational costs estimated at P130,700 and P102,000, payback period is 6.2 months, she said. Marlan Alexander Lukiew, Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE TOP OFFICIAL OF THE PAMBANSANG Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), a national group of militant fishermen, urged Senate and the House of Representatives to immediately conduct a joint or separate investigation on the reported cases of poaching by Chinese fishing vessels in the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park off Palawan.

"In the name of the Filipino people's sovereignty, national patrimony and environment, we oblige the Senate and the House committees on environment to pursue a full-blown, straightforward and above-board investigation to this year-round fishing incursion of Chinese poachers in Tubbataha Reef," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya chair, said in a statement furnished to the bureau.

Hicap made the call after environment activist Lorenzo Tan, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, chair of the Senate committee on environment, accused the Department of Foreign Affairs of alleged inaction for the release of Chinese fishermen caught by the Philippine Navy last Dec. 21 while entering the Unesco-declared World Heritage Site.

"We want the National Committee on Illegal Entrants and the senior DFA out of the picture to prevent obstruction of justice. The agency has been performing its role to the hilt as the dirty-work department of the government in charge of freeing poachers once caught fishing in Tubbataha by local authorities to save the immoral and unequal relation with China," he said.

Marine park rangers intercepted the Chinese vessel Hsi Wan manned by 20 crew members and loaded with 1,300 live Napoleon wrasse fish (locally known as "Mameng") and poaching gear.

The Chinese denied they were poachers and argued that they were merely passing through the park and that they brought the fish from the locals.

Tan, however, raised an alarm over reports that the DFA was intervening for the release of the Chinese fishermen, a charge the DFA has denied.

Hicap said officials of Malacañang, the DFA and other government agencies allegedly sending for the release of Chinese fishermen should be held liable for obstruction of justice and assault on national sovereignty.

"This conspiracy to undermine the sovereign rights of the people, the country's national patrimony and people's environment is one of the highest crimes against national interest. It is about time to commence and charge the people behind this purported rape of preserved marine diversity," he said.

On top of the demand for an investigation, the Pamalakaya leader also pushed for the filing of criminal and other appropriate charges against the owners and operators of Hsi Wan vessel.

Hicap said that while they supported the filing of criminal charges against the owners of the marine reef park, pressure should be exerted on the government to prevent China from assaulting the country's sovereign rights and environment.

The entry of commercial vessels into the Tubbataha Reef is banned by a presidential proclamation, while possession of "Mameng" is prohibited under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species.

Hicap stressed that vigilance should be maintained at all times, given the country's experience over the past six years in relation to Chinese poachers caught by local authorities illegally fishing in the country. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

READY FOR THE BANG
Despite repeated government warnings, many Filipinos are likely to greet the coming New Year with firecrackers, shown (from left) manufacturing frenzy.

Kin cling to hopes fishermen still alive

DAGUPAN CITY—TWO WEEKS after huge waves sank several fishing boats in the South China Sea, relatives of missing fishermen from at least six coastal towns of Pangasinan and Zambales have not given up hope that their loved ones would return home alive.

Mayor Eugenio Martinez of Infanta, Pangasinan, where most of the fishermen came from, said residents in the town remain hopeful that their missing relatives "are just out there, somewhere, waiting to be sent home."

"After almost 10 days of search and rescue operations, not one body has been recovered yet," Martinez said.

Task Force Infanta, which involved the Philippine Army, Navy, Coast Guard and the Philippine National Police, downgraded its operations from search and rescue to "monitoring."

Insp. Randy Klabayo, Infanta police chief, had taken over the task force.

Army Col. Gregory Cayetano, task force co-leader, reminded had earlier told the reporters that Navy ships and aircraft had scoured the sea lanes from Infanta to Palawan for possible survivors but did not find one.

"The search should now shift to the shorelines and we will leave this to the local police," Cayetano said. Aubrey Cardenas, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Rains displace 5,000 in Northern Samar towns

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE CONTINUOUS rain that hit the province this week resulted in the flooding in various areas in Northern Samar and displaced about 5,000 families in three towns.

The flooding came from three rivers, Banko River in Mondragon, Bantayan River in San Roque and Catarman Rivers in Catarman, after three days of incessant rain, Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza said.

Daza identified the affected towns were San Roque, Mondragon and the provincial capital, Catarman.

"The displaced families reside along the river banks, where these (rivers) overflowed due to the continuous heavy rains," Daza said when interviewed through his mobile phone.

The evacuation of the affected families started Friday Morning, he said.

According to Daza, three of the barangays in San Roque were flooded, affecting about over a thousand families.

In Mondragon town, the flooding affected a similar number of families in two of its barangays. The flood hit six of Catarman's barangays where 3,000 families sought refuge here.

Gloria wants Benguet veggie industry to be competitive

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—PRESIDENT GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo wants Benguet's vegetable industry to become viable and competitive because of its crucial role in the growth of the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle (NLAQ), an agribusiness official said here on Thursday.

Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Salvador Salazar said the DA had prepared a "whole basket of government support" for the industry so farmers in the province will enjoy enhanced production of fresh, hygienic and quality vegetables.

"[Mr. Arroyo] and [Agriculture] Secretary [Arthur] Yap are giving special attention to the vegetable industry of the province and the Cordillera to ensure the steady production of quality vegetables and enable farmers and manufacturers to earn more," Salazar told the reporters.

Yap is the Cabinet secretary in charge of the NLAQ, one of the country's super regions.

Salazar said government support is composed of farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems, infrastructure, post-harvest facilities, credit systems and wider market access.

He said Mr. Arroyo has a special concern for Benguet since she is well aware that the province "supplies 60 to 65 percent of the vegetable demand of the metropolitan area and the whole urban-Luzon super region."

At the Benguet State University here on Thursday, Mr. Arroyo said Yap gave local officials and farmers checks worth P1.5 million for several farm infrastructure projects.

The projects included a vegetable packaging and processing center near the veg stable trading post here, trambuan for backyards and a pre-cooling facility for Baguio town.

Mr. Arroyo also met off 28 trucks that will deliver vegetables for the first time to a new vegetable market along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Yap told Mr. Arroyo that the government's support for the industry would cut down farmers' post-harvest losses and would increase their incomes.

The support, Salazar said, included giving the farmers the opportunity to access the government's market linkages for vegetable products, like the "Homegrown Delicacies" and the "Barangay Food Terminal." Delmar Cariaso with a report from Reuben Cabaus, Inquirer Northern Luzon

NEW YEAR RESOLUTION
PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon ends the tip of rose by guard's shotgun during the inauguration of a police office in Baguio City

TO THE LAND OF THE WARLANDS: PO2 Isidro Marton of the Special Action Force holds a 30-cal. Barrett Sniper Rifle during send-off rites for Abra at its headquarters in Bicutan. The campaign-size force will be deployed to maintain peace and order as political tension continues in the following the murder of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. EPA/EDDIE

A HELPING HAND from daughter, lawyer Anne Valera in Camp Crame, after the governor's arrest on Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City PHOTOGRAPHER

WHAT'S INSIDE THE CLOSET? PNP CIDG Supt. Benjie Dela Senza (middle), the Bersamin assassination task force spokesperson, wants to know from Rep Joy Pudol (right), the driver of Kalinaw-marked and "common friend" of Abra Governor Valera, Margielen Dimagiba during a search of her residence at 13 Halagad St., Teresita Heights, Fairview, Quezon City. Looking on is NBI-HKCM Director Atty. Raul Lambo. EDDIE

Head-banging snakes predict China quakes

From page A1

Yantang Taiwan.

The earthquake beroma in Nantong, capital of the Hunnpei autonomous region in southern China, had developed its system using a combination of natural instinct and modern technology, the China Daily newspaper said.

Experts at the bureau monitor snakes at local snake farms via video cameras linked to a broadband Internet connection.

The video feed runs 24 hours per day.

Most sensitive

"Of all the creatures on earth, snakes are perhaps the most sensitive to earthquakes," bureau director Jiang Weisong was quoted as saying.

Jiang said snakes, a popular restaurant dish in the south in the winter, could sense an earthquake from 120 km away, three to five days before it happens. They respond by behaving strangely.

"When an earthquake is about to occur, snakes will move out of their caves, even in the cold of winter," Jiang was quoted as saying.

"If the earthquake is a big one, the snakes will even stand into middle while trying to escape."

China is struck by frequent earthquakes, with most killing remain trivial areas.

Two people were killed and 42 injured on Tuesday when three buildings collapsed in earthquakes that shook southern Taiwan.

While a tsunami warning came to nothing, the quake damaged underwater telecommunication cables, affecting users across Asia. Reuters

Cops hold Valera; girl friend's home searched

From page A1

Task force Bersamin, led by Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, and Rod Lacuda, National Bureau of Investigation (NCR) director, searched a bungalow at 23-B Bahagan Street in Theresa Heights but found "nothing illegal or untoward."

The search was done without a warrant because the police would not immediately secure one from a court, De los Santos said.

The police asked occupants of the house, including Senagalim's driver Rey Joy Pudol to effect a voluntary search. They agreed and signed a handwritten consent form.

Divine intervention

Charrie Bersamin, the eldest daughter of Bersamin, called Valera's arrest a "divine intervention."

"God is so good. There are positive signs that the slaying of my father and his security aide I will be solved soon," Charrie told the reporters in a telephone interview.

She said the family believed that Valera was involved in the murder, citing police investigation.

Police recently arrested one of the suspects in the slaying of Bersamin and Adelfo Orenga Nunez Mateo. Rufino Hinolay told Valera financed the operation to kill the lawmaker.

Valera has denied participation in the crime. He said he and Bersamin were political allies and were relatives.

Revoked permit to carry

Supt. Edwin Batucan, spokesperson of the Traffic Management Group (TMG), said Valera was taken into custody for violating the "no plate, no travel" policy and not for the Bersamin killing.

Chief Insp. Joseph Orcas, head of the TMG legal division, said the person to carry the guns had been revoked, as evidenced by a memo signed by former Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Arturo Lomibao.

"It will appear as illegal possession of firearms... He (Valera) was bringing his own evidence against him," Orcas told reporters.

He said the TMG legal division was "75 percent sure" it was filing charges of illegal possession of firearms against the Abra governor.

But Valera said all the guns were covered by the proper permits and that he got permission from the Abra provincial police commander to carry the guns outside of the province.

Batucan, in his security detail from the PNP was pulled out last months ago, Batucan said he had to apply for permits to carry guns.

Weeza blamed the police for arresting him. "I have a feeling that if they (they would not pin me down on the firearms rose from maybe (they would pin me) on other charges," he said.

Relaxed

A relaxed-looking Valera, wearing a white polo shirt, jeans and blue driving shoes, told reporters some of his valuables like four cellphones, a Rolex watch, ring, pendant and 97000,000 in cash, were missing.

Valera said the frustrations was "over" and the theater was still getting the license plates. One of his lawyers, Lito Gabol, said the vehicle was bought around two weeks ago from a dealer on Shaw boulevard.

But TMG officials insisted that the vehicle have production stickers dated 2006. Reporters also noticed on the windshield a sticker from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued in December 2005.

Batucan said the TMG received a report that Valera's Suburban was spotted along Commonwealth Avenue traveling out but any license and plates and arrega rawa.

Three others arrested

Reports said Valera came from the Senagalim house and was on his way to his home in Xavierville, Loyola Heights, also in Quezon City.

Batucan said Valera was then pardoned by Rep Joyce the vehicle. The team caught up with the vehicle on Commonwealth Avenue at 2:15 a.m. and told the driver to park in a gas station. The guns were found upon inspection of the vehicle.

Aside from Valera, taken two PNP custody were Pedro Cerilla, the driver of the vehicle, and the governor's aides Oscar Abello and Leo Bello.

Batucan said that the "no plate, no travel" policy is in accordance with Republic Act No. 4136, or the Land Transportation Code.

The law requires the police to flag down and inspect all vehicles traveling without plate numbers. It also requires the police to check the contents of the vehicles.

"We will verify if the vehicle is on the list of hot cars. If it is not included, then we will release it. Traveling with no plates is only an administrative violation. We will take out the guns. The firearms, we still have to verify them," Batucan said.

No charges yet

The penalty for traveling without a plate is from P500 to P1,000. The use of canvas is subject to a fine and confiscation.

"This is all SOP (standard operating procedure. The occupants of the vehicle) should be brought here to TMG," he said.

Valera told reporters he went to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) yesterday and was told that no charges had been filed against him for the Bersamin case.

Director Jesus Verzosa, the CIDG head, told the Inquirer that Valera appeared at the CIDG apparently thinking he was being arrested for the Bersamin killing.

"I told my men to book from me Valera but now him over to the TMG because it was the TMG's that arrested him for traveling without any license plates," Verzosa said.

But the CIDG chief said turning over Valera to the TMG did "not necessarily [mean] clearing him of the killings. He must have thought he has been cleared in the investigation of the killing."

Still subject of investigation

Verzosa said the ethnic governor was still the subject of an arrest warrant because of Pudol's testimony.

Pudol had told investigators Freddie Dupo, a suspect in the Bersamin killing, mentioned to him that Valera had taken out a contract to kill Bersamin for P5 million.

"It should be voluntary if he wants to subject himself to the investigation in connection with the Bersamin killing. If he wants to go, then that's OK. If he doesn't want to go, then that's his right," Verzosa told the Inquirer.

Valera said he contacted Gandoola two days ago and went due to appear yesterday at the office of the Quezon City police chief, Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula to shed light on the Bersamin murder.

This was confirmed by both Gatdula and Verzosa. "All actions of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) and even the CIDG were canceled and cleared by the CIDG," Verzosa said.

The CIDG, QCPD and the NBI have formed Task Force Bersamin to investigate the case, with Verzosa as head.

Invitation

On Wednesday police went to Valera's house in Loyola Heights to deliver an invitation for him to appear before investigators and tell them what he knew of the fact of murder of Bersamin and his police escort.

The policemen, however, failed to find the governor in his house.

Courtesy

Valera called on the police to accord him the "proper courtesy" as a local government official.

"I would like to state here that even while the Chief PNP has stated that its just a simple traffic violation, as an official of the province of Abra, I should also be accorded due courtesy," Valera told reporters.

Valera reiterated he was being framed.

He denied knowing Pendoy but admitted to knowing another suspect, former La Paz Mayor Freddie Dupo. "I know Dupo because at one time he was vice mayor of La Paz. But how? That's a true sign, he went into hiding because he was implicated," he said.

He noted that Monday's statements were "double hearsay."

The governor called on the police to investigate the Bersamin killing thoroughly and explore other angles besides politics.

Not running away

He said he was "not running away" from the police. "My lawyers and I are ready to face Gatdula," but I had to call them (lawyers) here because of this incident. As I have said, the truth shall set us free."

Valera added: "I am not running from anyone and I want to face whatever charges they have against me provided I am accorded my constitutional rights and due process."

"I am confident my name will be cleared," he said.

Chief Supt. Isreal Pisi, chief of the TMG, said the group had recalled complaints that the Suburban was traveling around Metro Manila since Dec. 28.

Third party

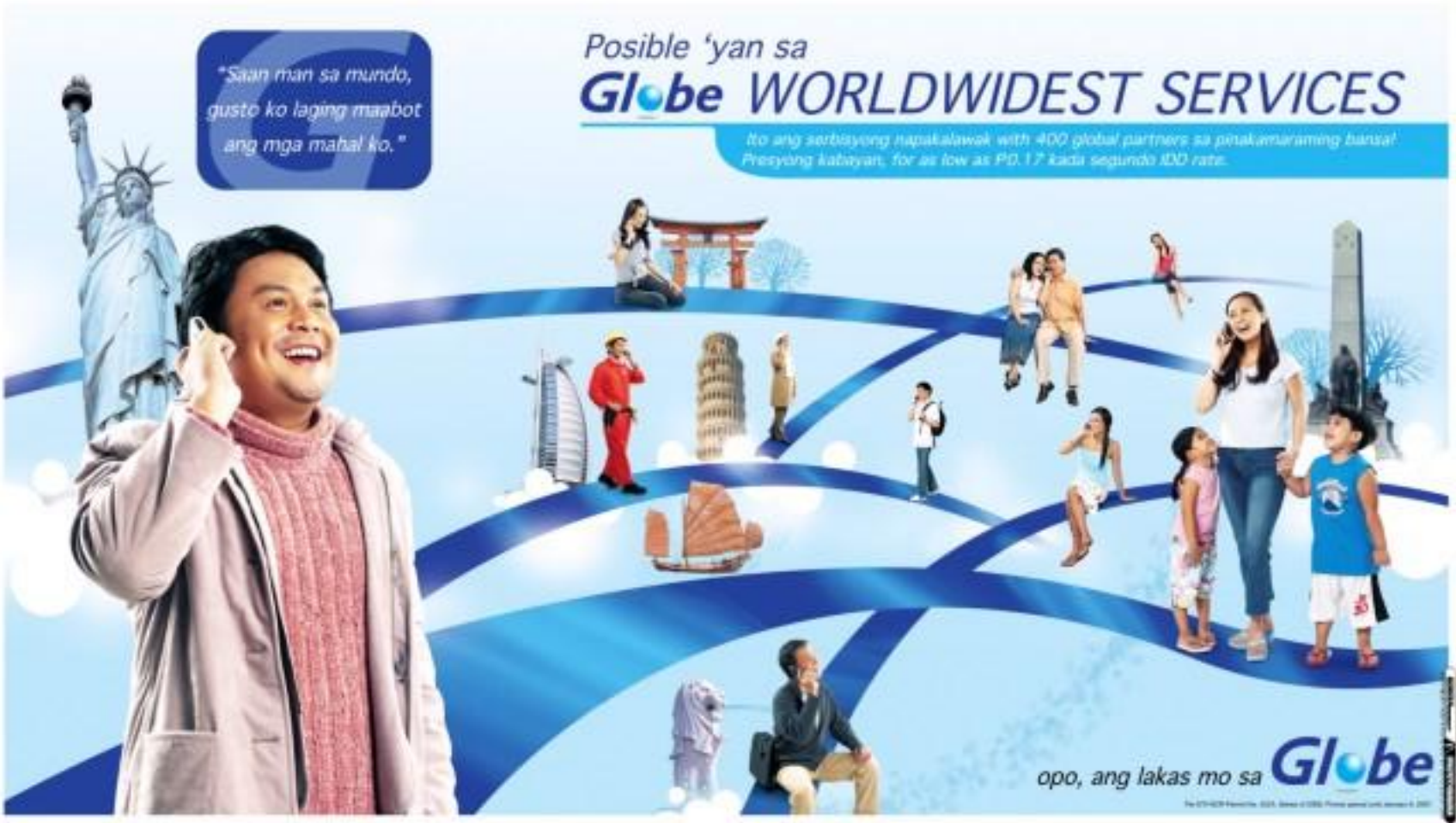
In Baguio City, Director General Oscar Calderon, the PNP chief, said the police might not be able to question Valera because he was not charged with the murder of Bersamin.

At a joint conference, Calderon said Valera himself might need police protection from a "third party" who may retaliate.

"Will it come from the Bersamin family? I don't think that will happen. But we are concerned about the safety of the governor. Definitely there will be a third party who will take advantage of the situation," he said.

Calderon is shedding no security measures in Baguio where President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of the First family are spending their holidays.

He said the police were trying to promptly to Mrs violent response to Bersamin's murder. The province has become volatile now that attention has been given to unsolved political killings in the province, according to Calderon. — With reports from and Vincent Cabreza and Leslie Ann Aquino, Inquirer Northern Luzon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ATTY. Imam Berenteng

Freeze order on bank accounts

Suspected shabu mart operator linked to money laundering

By Armand N. Nocum

THE COURT OF APPEALS (CA) ORDERED the Equitable PCI Bank and Planters Development Bank in Pasig City to freeze bank accounts of suspected shabu market operator Amin Imam Berenteng allegedly linked to the assets of Cash executive.

The court granted the petition of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) for issuance of a 20-day freeze order against the accounts of Godofredo A. Medrolla's bank manager of EPTES Distributor Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City, who was allegedly hired by Berenteng to launder drug money. The appellate court said Berenteng's alleged money laundering activities were related to drug trafficking.

The freeze order, meant to stop the withdrawal of the assets in question, covers Medrolla's bank accounts at EQCIB Pasig and four accounts at Planters Development Bank believed to hold proceeds from Berenteng's illegal activities.

"Considering that the drug trafficking activities of the group of Amin Imam Berenteng is an 'unlawful activity' listed under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, that there is reasonable ground to believe that the bank accounts and investments of Godofredo A. Medrolla are related to the drug trafficking activities of Amin Imam Berenteng's group and that, unless seized, advanced computer technology of the electronic banking system would make it possible for Godofredo A. Medrolla to dissipate the subject bank accounts in a matter of seconds, we order the issuance of a freeze order effective immediately for a period of 20 days against the bank accounts or investments, and their related web of accounts, in the name of Godofredo A. Medrolla," said the court resolution.

The Anti-Money Laundering Act grants the court authority to issue a 20-day freeze order against monetary instruments or properties related to unlawful activity.

Executives of the two banks were also ordered to submit, within 24 hours from receipt of the order, a report detailing all relevant information surrounding the subject bank accounts, including the nature of the monetary instruments or properties; information on the current web of accounts pertaining to the monetary instrument or property; and no explanation as to the ground for shielding the existence of such accounts. Imam Medrolla's Police rank of the arraignment, claimed Berenteng had bank accounts in an Equitable PCI Bank branch in Pasay, and had given P50,000 to the bank manager, identified later as Medrolla, for "assistance."

AMIN Imam Berenteng (JOHN BOCOBO)

'Boga' not a safe alternative to firecrackers, say cops

By Tarra V. Quismundo, Tina G. Santos, Jocelyn R. Uy, and Edson C. Tandoc, Jr.

THE HIGHLY POPULAR *BOGA* MAY not be a safer alternative to firecrackers after all.

With just two sprays of denatured alcohol, it can shoot a fist-size up to 10 meters away, have spectators up to their knees in heavy cardboard and spark fire in plastic.

Boga is an improvised cannon made of PVC (polyvinyl chloride) pipe and fed with alcohol. Sold on the streets for P800-800 depending on size, the noisemaker has become a favored alternative to fireworks.

An experiment conducted yesterday by the Makati Police Station showed that the improvised cannon, touted as a safer alternative to firecrackers, can also cause injury and damage to property.

Meanwhile, Manila policemen have started confiscating bogs because of reports that it caused several injuries since the holiday revelry began. A Manila health official disclosed earlier that it was responsible for eight at 24 firecrack-er-related injuries reported in the city Dec. 1-26.

The National Capital Region Police Office directed Metro Manila law enforcers to confiscate such devices even as the Department of Health sought a ban on the improvised cannons.

Makati police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said their experiment showed the bogs was very damaging and could cause burns and injury.

"Our experiment was meant to check the extent of damage the bogs could cause if a projectile was launched from it. It could pierce through thick cardboard, which means if it hits a person, it could definitely break the skin or wound the person," Cruz told reporters.

Held at the grounds of the Makati Park and Garden, yesterday's experiment was conducted on orders of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, who expressed concern over the prevalence of bogs in Makati.

Using improvised cannons constructed the day before, police showed the damage it caused when it ejected a projectile like a tin can. "It is very dangerous because you could put shrapnel or broken glass inside with tin," Binay said.

MAKATI Police Chief Gilbert Cruz (left) and Mayor Jejomar Binay test improvised cannons (bogs) confiscated in the city at the Makati Garden and Park grounds yesterday (JOHN BOCOBO)

Members of the station's Special Weapons and Tactics team also checked how powerful the common ingredient of ignited using gasoline, lighter fluid or denatured alcohol. They found that bogs worked better and louder with alcohol.

"Right now, we have no law yet, but

BOGA, A 18

Better safe than sorry, advises grieving father

By Edson C. Tandoc, Jr.

THE FATHER OF A 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL who died in a central Cebu accident in Mandaue City is asking for vigilance and caution to prevent amusement park fatalities thoroughly before granting permits to its operators.

"The local governments should inspect the rides first before they allow the public to board," Greg Pesendel said. "If possible, there should also be regular tests even during the days when the carnivals are already operational," he added.

Pesendel's daughter Rachelene will be buried at the Loyola Memorial Park this morning. Her sister Kimberly, who survived the accident on Monday, remained under observation in the hospital. Pesendel expressed gratitude to the Mandaue City government, which he said were quick in providing help to his family.

Four wooden ride cars operating in a small carnival in the major Iloilo Fiesta crashed to the ground after the metal contrive holding the cars broke on Monday afternoon. Documents showed the owner of the carnival had secured permits from the city health department, the barangay office and the police and recreation office of the City Hall as early as last month.

The city fire station has already completed its investigation report, but the city engineering office has not yet submitted any fact days after the accident.

Quezon City treasurer's office open on weekends for taxpayers

By DJ Yap

IN EFFECTIVE, THE TAXMAN OF QUEZON City is embracing the New Year on a hard note.

Starting Jan. 1, the city treasurer's office will be open even on weekends—still, no lunch breaks—to accommodate taxpayers rushing to settle their obligations with the city.

City treasurer Thony Bañiga announced yesterday that his office would be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. without breaks, to accommodate those taxpayers who could not afford to take time off from work during regular office hours.

Bañiga urged taxpayers, especially those who need to renew their business licenses, to take advantage of the extended working days and to avoid the last-hour rush.

Last year, the Quezon City government collected more than P2.9 billion in tax payments in the first two weeks of 2006, representing an increase of almost 60 percent from the previous year.

Ngayong Pasko, todo ang batian at kuwentuhan sa mga mahal mo sa abroad.
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3. Key in your Globe1 card number followed by the access sign (#).
4. To start calling IDD, just dial 00 + country code + area code + telephone number + pound sign (#).
Globe 1 The power of one

ASPAC FOR GAWAD KALINGA
Aseroe Home count by managers in the Asia-Pacific recently met in Manila to recognize Gawad Kalinga as an effective corporate social responsibility program. GK head Tony Meloto presents, in exhibit, a dream with Aseroe Home Philippines managing director Jacobi (left) and Chuck Finn Music.

'Saudi husband has links with Bin Laden'

By Lala B. Salamera

A FORMER BEAUTY TITLE holder has asked the Bureau of Immigration to deport her estranged Saudi husband believed by the alleged ties to al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and for a string of cases from child custody to assault.

Sabrina Arnali, former Miss Philippines International, said her Saudi businessman fiancé Ali Sandiego was an undesirable alien.

She alleged he failed to give financial support to their two children and was harassing them. Bendaga, through his lawyer, denied Arnali's charges and described her allegations linking him to Bin Laden as "untrue, unfounded, self-serving, baseless and most importantly, without basis." Bin Laden was tagged as the mastermind behind the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States.

Bendaga said the charges against him should not be entertained because they were expatriates and intended to facilitate false claims for to get money and support.

Arnali earlier asked the BI to deport Bendaga for failing to secure an alien employment permit from the labor department. The BI initially ordered the Saudi national's expulsion but, following an appeal, amended its decision and lifted him instead.

In her complaint, Arnali alleged Bendaga met with Bin Laden in the Philippines sometime in 1999. She said Bendaga's sister was involved with the Muslim World League, a Saudi charity organization which she said was being used by victims of the 2001 attacks. She said the group held office at the Oman Tower building, Salcedo Street, Makati City.

"I was asked to host a dinner for the ex members in apartment 206 Twin Towers Condominium Philippines, sometime in 1999, and two of the guests were Bin Laden," she said in the BI.

MetroBriefs

3 dead in QC fire

A 61-YEAR-old woman and her two children died in a three-hour blaze that struck their house in an upscale neighborhood in Quezon City on Thursday night. Elbert Lumbres, Tan and her children Ivan II, 18, and Princess, 11, who were trapped inside the bathroom on the second floor of their house at 19 Mercurio St., Corinthian Gardens, fire officials said. The fire started in the living room of the two-story house at 9:40 p.m., quickly spreading to the rest of the house, according to a report by a fire investigator PO2 Rosemarie Galvez. Erwina, the wife of businessman Henry Yao, and their son and daughter were reportedly locked inside, unable to escape because the windows had grills. Family survivors could have caused the fire, a quick official in the Quezon City fire department said.

— By Yap

Robbery foiled

A BANK employee in on a customer's trail to rob a donut shop in Makati City early yesterday morning. Abet Tinoco, driver, pushed outside the bank, however, and after confronting the wrong and opposing his action, pretending the man is the. But police said he was gang, officials caught up shortly with Richard Montes, reported robber in the single Southeast Bus. Investigators said Montes would be charged with attempted robbery.

— Dave E. Zademondo

Business deal could be behind ex-cop's slay

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) is looking into the possibility that a business deal "gone sour" could have triggered the killing of a former Manila policeman.

NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Reed Landa said they were summoning sisters Edgardo Castro's former business partner, a foreign national who owned a bar in Pasay City.

"We would raise a subpoena to Castro's former business associate to shed light on the case," Landa said in an interview yesterday.

Initial information showed that Castro managed the bar with the foreigner, his friend of 20 years. However, Castro was "ousted out of the business," Landa said.

Castro later filed charges against the foreigner before the Bureau of Immigration seeking his deportation. "This is one of the angles we are considering," the NBI-NCR chief said.

An NBI investigation disclosed that Castro was arguing with the first suspect at the parking lot of the Harrison Plaza mall in Malate, Manila prior to the shooting on Dec. 22.

Witnesses told investigators that Armando Landar, Castro's alleged companion, tried to mediate.

Suddenly, the second suspect shot Castro and Landar in the head. Castro died on the spot. Landar was later declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila.

Witnesses saw the first suspect shoot Castro in the back before fleeing with his companion on board a sedan-type vehicle.

In an earlier interview, NBI Deputy Director for Regional Operation Services (ROS) Bernardo Ermentido said he might have seen the gunmen before the incident while he was having lunch at the coffee shop at the nearby Century Park Hotel.

The NBI official said he saw a man wearing an orange baseball cap, who seemed to be looking for someone in the smoking area.

Ermentido said Castro usually ate in the smoking area when he was with colleagues.

The NBI official has requested copies of the hotel's closed-circuit television tapes that could have footage of the suspect on video.

Ermentido said they would ask the witnesses to look at the videos.

LITTLE GIRL BLUE
A street labmates he her routine not looking for a hearty lunch he lunch a'clean, hopefully not in vain.

'Boga' not a safe alternative . . .

From page A11

hopefully results of this experiment could be used to draft a city ordinance banning these drinkers. But we have been directed to confiscate all these tested samples to send Manila," Cruz said.

Meanwhile, Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, acting director of the Manila Police District, said they had confiscated at least 300 dogs since Thursday.

"We're now strictly enforcing the ban on dogs upon the directive of the Mayor Lito Atienza," he said.

Abarzosa said he sees would continue catching the rounds of city streets to ensure that nobody used dogs to meet some the New Year.

"Last year there were no reported injuries from dogs, but since it's the 'in' thing now among the youth, we have gotten a number of cases this year," said Dr. Virgilio Martin, director coordinator of the Manila Health Office, adding that the dogs are could go up if kids were not warned about it.

In southern Metro Manila, 200 residents joined the police keeping the improvised barricks off the streets.

Ronald Cuan, national chair of the Philippine National Police-Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO), said they will be making the rounds of affiliated areas in the southern metropolis on board motorcycles provided by the Southern Police District to confiscate dogs and other illegal firecrackers starting today.

SPO Director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales said reports that the 200 IADs have been mobilized to arrest people using the banned improvised cannons.

"We will be bringing along mega-phones to make our message clear by discouraging people from buying toys, firing their guns and using bogas," Rosales told the reporters.

At least 38 improvised cannons, with prices ranging from P200 to P1,000, were destroyed by Supt. Ronald Bataller, Pasadena police chief, before Sunday at the SPD Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City yesterday.

As authorities extended the public against dollar-buster Ching, the Taguig police yesterday reported that a man had killed friend Bill Jordan, head of the city's Social Welfare Development on Wednesday morning.

Police in the eastern Metro have also confiscated more than 300 pieces of the dreaded bogs.

Police Chief Supt. Director Chief Supt. Lulu Tomas said they also confiscated hundreds of thousands worth of illegal firecrackers.

He said 44 pieces of bogs were seized in Mandaluyong City, 29 in Pasig City, 20 in Muntinlupa City, and 17 in San Juan.

"The improvised cannon poses a danger to life and limb. It is potential-ly harmful. We are prohibiting its use," Tomas said.

Thirty-four of the 171 persons injured last between December 21-27 were bogs users, according to the Department of Health.

Two can play the game just as well

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

ENJOY wear, days before New Year's Eve, the hustle of policemen patrols and rifles are roped to prevent those from firing indiscriminately to greet the coming year.

The symbolic gesture is a lot of doing. Cops fire their guns during New Year's Eve with or without the tape on the muzzles of their guns. So of what use is that gesture?

Why don't the higher-ups just roll the cops about the dire consequences of indiscriminate firing, such as discussed by our readers?

Once it's proven that a cop fired his gun on New Year's Eve, he should be unceremoniously booted out of the service. No questions asked. Just give him his walking papers.

The same discipline will be observed in the Philippine National Police (PNP). The first factor...the fear of losing his job—makes a cop toe the line.

As it is policemen are too afraid to violate the rules of the book. What's the reason he's protected by anti-torture rules that provide that he should be given "due process" when he's accused of wrongdoing. While the case against him is being heard, the cop concerned is on absent his business.

The same privilege is not enjoyed by a ordinary man who, when he's facing charges in a military court, is jailed or confined to quarters. In the case of a military man with a rumor rank, he can be removed from the service without a military court martial.

Here's another problem: Why can't a cop who violates traffic rules, like running a red light, be fined on the spot? Why should he be given a ticket to be settled in court?

Ordinary citizens are fined on the spot for violating simple traffic rules, why should they follow the same rules?

A disciplined police force makes for a disciplined citizenry. Civilians who see their policemen toeing the line will obey the rules.

But how can you expect your ordinary cop to obey the law when he sees high government officials violating the same law? Like elevating to re-election, or stealing P728 million from the government?

* * *

Postscript: Bhagsagad Antonio's appointment of her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, as a senatorial candidate is like getting the kind of death.

If elections are to be held tomorrow, Defensor would suffer a humiliating defeat.

It's regrettable that a young man with a very bright future has been destroyed by his affiliation with the accused most hated Chief Executive of this country, the first being Marcos.

* * *

Nothing will come out of the civil suit against Fred Seedhouse Mike Arroyo that was filed the other day by 40 journalists he has charged with libel.

But then, it has sent a message to Malacañang that reporters, editors and columnists can play Mr. Arroyo's kind of game. We will see the results, or he has, to get back at him.

The gesture also sent the message to our courts that we still have trust in our judiciary even if some of the prosecutors and judges are held by the nose by Malacañang.

The WORLD

Editor Lenoree B. Guzzo

Saddam bids family farewell in prison

BAGHDAD—SADDAM HUSSEIN bade two half brothers farewell on Thursday in a cell prison meeting as the awaits execution, a lawyer said, but US and Iraqi officials gave conflicting accounts of whether he would hang within days.

A senior Bush administration official said the ousted president would go to the gallows in as soon as tomorrow.

But Iraqi officials backed away from suggestions they would definitely hang him within a month's end: a cabinet minister told Reuters a week-long religious holiday would mark any execution.

"He was in very high spirits and already readying himself," Badie Arif, a defense lawyer, told Reuters after the 69-year-old former leader met half-brothers Wathan and Sabawi, who are also both held in the US army's Camp Cropper near Baghdad airport.

"He told them he was happy he wouldn't meet his death at the hands of his enemies and he a martyr, not just languish in jail.

"He...gave them letters to his family in anticipation."

The secretary of the US-sponsored process by which Saddam and three of his former aides, along with another senior member of the Baath party, were condemned on Nov. 5 has left considerable room for wrangling over the timing of any execution among rival factions and between Washington and Baghdad.

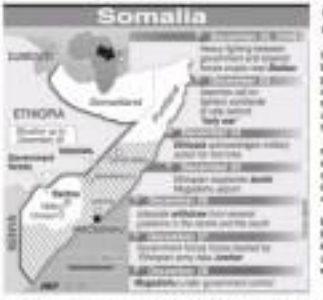
Startling to views of all-out sectarian civil war, Shiite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki had said he wanted dictators hanged this year for the killings, torture and other crimes against the Shiite population of the town of Dujail.

But some of Saddam's fellow Sunnis have warned this could reinforce their community's alienation and many others freely term Saddam first executed of genocide against them.

Iraqi Saddam-era penal code bars executions on religious holidays. Eid al-Adha, coinciding with the hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, runs from Friday until week or more on Jan. 7.

Nonetheless, the US official in the United States said: "I've heard that it's going to be a couple more days, probably." Reuters

SADDAM



Somalia set to declare martial law

MOGADISHU—SOMALI PRIME Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi said parliament would declare a period of martial law to maintain control of the territory after the Somalia Islamic Courts Council (SICC) since June.

While Gedi on Thursday celebrated a triumphant return to his home village outside Mogadishu for the first time since 2002, he acknowledged the chaotic country was far from stable.

"This country has experienced insecurity and in order to restore security, we need a strong hand, especially with freelance militias," he said of the country which has not had an effective government since the 1991 ouster of a dictator.

Gedi told reporters in Mombasa, Kenya, a dusty village some 40 km southwest of Mogadishu, parliament would declare martial law on Saturday for a period of three months.

The flight of government forces from the capital after the Islamists swept in was a dramatic turnaround in the Horn of Africa nation after they had spread across the south imposing sharia rule and confined the interim government to its base in Baidoa until last December two weeks ago.

Then Gedi's government's defiance in a city that has become a byword for chaos, some Mogadishu residents took to the streets to show government troops, while others hid. Some SICC fighters ditched their uniforms to avoid reprisals.

Government spokesperson Abdirahman Dinari said the Islamists had fled to the southern port city of Kismayo and that the administration now controlled 95 percent of Somalia.

But analysts said a government victory was in no way certain and that the conflict could be about to take another turn.

"I think we're in a countryside fight now," said Jere Bledsoe, Horn of Africa specialist at Davidson College in Charleston, North Carolina. AFP

Passengers, crew foil would-be Russian hijacker

PRAGUE—CREW MEMBERS and passengers overpowered a Russian man who tried to hijack an Aeroflot plane on Thursday and the aircraft safely made an emergency landing in Prague, airline officials said.

"One of the passengers on board the Moscow-Geneva flight said he had an explosive device and ordered (the crew) to change course," Lor Kashlyalov, deputy general director of the Russian airline, told Reuters.

"There are reasons to believe that this man are are of hooligan tendency," he added.

The Airbus A-310, on a charter flight from Moscow to Geneva, made an unplanned landing in the Czech capital after the pilot declared an emergency while the man tried to force the way into the flight deck.

Passengers and crew members overpowered the man and handed him over to Czech police who were questioning him, officials said.

"A drunk person was on board. He provoked a brawl with passengers, threatened to damage the plane and demanded that it change the course," Ivan Ivan tower agency quoted Viktor Bezhkhovich, an Aeroflot representative in Prague, as saying.

Vladislav Franek, the head of the Czech police force, told reporters there was a suspicion the man was drunk but added police were waiting for results of medical tests. Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

Rio violence

RIO DE JANEIRO—Suspected gunmen with automatic pistols patrolled the spectacular New Year's celebrations after gangs attacked buses and police posts on Thursday in a wave of violence that killed at least 13 people. Eleven people were burned to death on buses and many bars and stores were wounded, said Rio state public security secretary Roberto Precioso, who blamed drug gangs and their jailed kingpins for 72 attacks across the seaside city. Police deployed more than 10,000 officers to the streets to contain the violence, which started after midnight. Ten buses were torched in the afternoon rampage during police raids. The celebrations on Copacabana beach, which draws huge crowds of tourists. Reuters

Sea mishap

DUBAI—At least 11 passengers were killed and 140 missing after two boats collided off the coast of Yemen, the UN refugee agency said on Thursday. The two boats sank in rough seas on Wednesday after Yemeni security forces opened fire on smugglers trying to bring more than 300 people into the country across the Gulf of Aden in the latest tragedy to hit migrants in the area. Four boats were involved in the smuggling operation, the UNHCR said. Two boats had 267 Ethiopian passengers and were then forced by Yemeni security forces, the report said. Another boat, carrying 91 people, overturned by agitated passengers, leaving one man dead and 11 missing. AFP

Thaksin probe

BANGKOK—Thailand's army-installed government said the junta have approved an initial probe into Thaksin Shinawatra's conduct while in the Kingdom after investigations into him are finalized, an official said Friday. Military-appointed Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont met with junta leader General Sonthi Boonyaratglin on Wednesday to discuss the issue and provide a request by nature to Bangkok, a government spokesman told AFP on condition of anonymity. "Surayud and General Sonthi agreed that Thaksin could return after the results of investigations related to him become clear in one or two months," the official said. AFP

Ferry capsizes

JAKARTA—A passenger ferry capsized in rough waters off the coast of Sumatra, leaving one hundred 50 missing, officials said Friday. The 74 to 76 that I was informed to have been carrying 60 crew and passengers when it sank Thursday night in rough seas off the West Java, about 400 km (250 miles) west of the capital, Jakarta, said Zainal Ali, the chief provincial transportation official. Ali said 75 people were rescued after the 200-tonne ferry capsized on its way from the South Sumatran capital of Palembang to Merak, a nearby island in the neighboring Banten-Bantung province. The cause of the accident was not immediately clear. AP

Ford cites long friendship as reason for Nixon's pardon

PALM DESERT—FORMER PRESIdent Gerald R. Ford acknowledged in an interview last year that his long personal friendship with Richard Nixon did indeed play a role in his decision to pardon the disgraced former president, The Washington Post reported.

"I looked upon him as my personal friend. And I always treasured our relationship. And I had an instinctive sense grooming the pardon, because I felt that we had this relationship and that I didn't want to see my real friend have this stigma," Ford told Post reporter Bob Woodward, according to a story in the paper Thursday night.

Ford's remarks, which he asked not be released until his death, add to the rationale for purchasing Nixon a month after he resigned as president in 1974. Ford had insisted that he issued the pardon to allow the nation to move past Watergate and begin a time of healing, not for personal reasons.

Nixon and Ford had been acquainted since the late 1940s, but the depth of their friendship was not widely known. Nixon confided in Ford and sought his help during the Watergate crisis when Ford was House minority leader, the Post reported.

"I think that Nixon felt I was about the only person he could really trust on the hill," Ford told Woodward. He also called him, "a friend in need, and friend."

In Palm Desert, California, on days of mourning for Ford begin Friday with a simple, private prayer service at his parish church.

Former first lady Betty Ford, 88, and her four grown children were to gather at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church to receive his casket from a military honor guard at midday.

A private visitation for close friends was to follow the family service before the start of a public viewing expected to draw thousands of people to the desert resort town 175 km east of Los Angeles.

Mr. Ford will then accompany her husband's body across the nation for a series of ceremonies that includes two funeral services in Washington, DC, and another in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he will be entombed Wednesday.

The Weds began swordlapping as Dr. Margaret's a past after retiring to Rancho Mirage.

The ceremony prompted tight security at the church, with the entire complex locked down for Secret Service sweeps and surrounding residential streets blocked off. U.S. Air Force One will be used to fly Ford's litary service, with a salute dropped to fly the presidential red from an ebony staff as Ford's casket is taken from the hearse.

Despite hoping to pay their respects to the United States' former president during the public repose will be shuttled to the church from a remote center several miles away, and will not be allowed to bring personal items including cameras, cell phones, purses or flowers with them.

Ford's body will then accompany her husband's body across the nation for a series of ceremonies that includes two funeral services in Washington, DC, and another in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he will be entombed Wednesday.

The Weds began swordlapping as Dr. Margaret's a past after retiring to Rancho Mirage.

Muslim pilgrims begin haj amid tight security

80,000 pilgrims performing the tawaf on Dec. 29 on the plain of Arafat, near Mecca, where Prophet Mohammad gave his farewell sermon 14 centuries ago.

MECCA, SAUDI ARABIA—Around two million Muslim faithful were heading Thursday from Mecca to the valley of Mina as the annual haj pilgrimage got under way in Saudi Arabia amid heavy security.

Dragnet in white robes, the pilgrims headed for Stoned Jamrat to Mina, the kilometers east of the holy city of Mecca, to begin tracing the journey made by Prophet Mohammed more than 1,400 years ago.

"Everything is proceeding according to plan," Saudi interior ministry spokesperson General Mansur al-Turki said.

Turki said the final number of pilgrims would not be known until the haj climaxes on Friday, when the faithful move to Mount Arafat where they will spend the day praying and asking for God's forgiveness—at the summit, in a symbolic waiting for the last judgment.

More than 1.6 million people from across the world have arrived in Saudi Arabia, and their numbers have been swelled by Muslims and other Muslims residents in the country to above two million.

Over two-thirds of the pilgrims are expected to spend the day known as "Yaum al-Tarwiya" in Mina, an optional ritual, while others will head straight to Mount Arafat on Friday, Turki said.

Pilgrims spread the day in prayer and meditation in Mina, sleeping at night in tents before heading further south to Mount Arafat.

Thousands of Saudi security forces have been deployed along the routes to be used by the pilgrims and official media said security and health authorities are mobilized to ensure the safety of the faithful during what may result, with dozens of field hospitals and clinics set up in the area.

The last haj to January was marred by a deadly stampede which killed 364 people in Mina during a ritual which involves casting stones at pillars representing Satan.

A similar stampede in 2004 saw 251 people trampled to death during the stoning ceremony.

Both stampedes occurred in the entrance to the Jamarat bridge, from where pilgrims cast their stones at three pillars that are supposed to symbolize the power of evil. AFP

Mega-ligayang PASKO mula sa Globe Kabalikat

Tuloy-tuloy ang Merryunions ngayong Pasko.

Mula sa pagdating ng inyong mga kamag-anak galing abroad at hanggang sa muling pag-alis, nandito ang Globe, ang Kabalikat ng pamilyang Pinoy. Si PGMA mismo at mga celebrity ang kasama niyo sa pagsundo sa mga umuwing kamag-anak sa Christmas Kabalikat Salubong sa NAIA. Sa Globe at Duty Free Christmas Shopping Rush lalong naging exciting ang paminsi ng pamilya dahil sa nagtatakbuhang papremyo tulad ng house and lot, dalawang Isuzu Crosswind at iba pa. At dahil ang laksa niyo sa Globe, ang buong bansa ay nagkaroon ng matinding katuwaan sa Kabalikat OWWA Family Days na ginanap sa Enchanted Kingdom, Leyte, Davao, Maguindanao, Oriental Mindoro, Koronadal, Ilo-ilo, Pangasinan, Zamboanga, Agusan del Sur at iba pa. At para sa inyong karegdagang kaalamang pangkabuhayan, hinatid ng Globe kasama ang Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship ang Go Negosyo Livelihood Fair sa Market! Market!

WELCOME HOME KABALIKAT! Kinamusta nina PGMA, OWWA Admin. Hilo Roque at DOLE Usec. Danilo Cruz ang mga Pinoy na umuwi para sa Pasko sa NAIA terminal.

ANGHEL DINALA NG GLOBE SA LUPA. Dahil ang laksa niya sa Globe, nakasama si Angelica Panganiban sa pagsundo sa mga Pinoy na umuwi para sa Pasko.

SMILE MO KITA KO! Sa ngiti lang ni Patrick Garcia at ng mga kamag-anak na sumusubo sa kanila, talagang lumiwanag ang araw ng lahat ng mga umuwing OFW sa Christmas Kabalikat Salubong.

HAMBOG-GAYA SA PAMILYA MULA SA GLOBE. Tuwang-tuwang tinanggap ng Sales Family mula kay Ryan Ricardo ng Globe ang tseking nagkakahalaga ng P25,000 sa Kabalikat Christmas Salubong.

MANIT NA PAGSUNDO PARA SA KABALIKAT. Dahil sa Globe, pinalnit ni Cesa Pondi ng Pinoy Big Brother ang pagsundo sa mga umuwing Pinoy sa NAIA.

MAKULAY NA PASKO KABALIKAT. Nagtatakbuhan ng kulay si Jolina sa NAIA nang sumama ang artista sa Christmas Kabalikat Salubong.

KATUWAAN KASAMA SI CAMILLE. Inaliw ni Camille Prats ang mga lega-Pangasinan sa Kabalikat OWWA Family Days.

TODO SERBISYO PARA SA KABALIKAT. Handa ng tie'l ibang papremyo ang nakasama sa opening ng Christmas Shopping Rush mula sa Duty Free at Globe.

MAAGANG CAROLING WITH PDA. Hinarana ng mga Pinoy Dream Academy Scholars Ivan, Rasita at Yeng ang mga nakasama sa Christmas Shopping Rush.

PASKO NA SINTA KO... Hinarana ng OWWA choir ang mga pamilyang OFW sa SM City Cebu suong Disyembre 16.

KAMUSTA KABALIKAT? Sa participation ng Globe, nakisaya rin si Kempee de Leon sa opisina ng POEA.

GO GO GO SA NEGOSYO! Pinamahagi ng Globe kung paano bilhin lahe ang sari-sari store gamit ang Globe AutoloadMax at Globe Broadband sa Go Negosyo na ginanap sa Market! Market!

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

ang laksa mo sa Globe

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Dirk jumper** caps mighty Mavs rally /A23

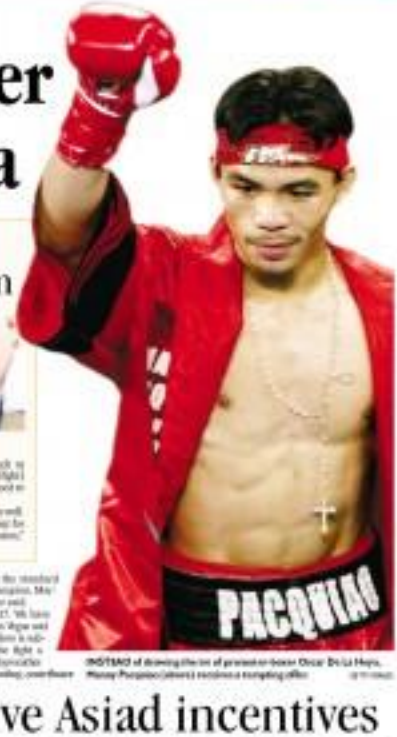
SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez

■ **RP team** posts Asian U-19 rugby title romp /A24

PROMOTIONAL TUG-OF-WAR

Pacquiao gets better offer from DL Hoya



INSTEAD of drowning the ire of promoter-boxer Oscar De La Hoya, Manny Pacquiao (above) received a tempting offer /P-1 PHOTO

OSCAR DE LA HOYA'S GOLDen Boy Promotions yesterday upped the ante as it offered Filipino boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao a much better deal for a March 17 showdown with Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera.

A day after Pacquiao announced he had chosen Bob Arum as his promoter, Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, in an interview with Inquirer, told Arum his ex-fight charmer has the legal promotion of Pacquiao.

"We have read reports out of the Philippines that Bob Arum made an offer to Golden Boy Promotions for $2.5 million to provide the services of Marco Antonio Barrera for a fight with Manny Pacquiao on Apr. 26 in Las Vegas," Schaefer said.

"We're surprised by these actions since Top Rank doesn't have options on either fighter. Golden Boy, on the other hand, has a valid promotional deal with Barrera and believes that, ultimately, as well with Pacquiao."

Schaefer's offer came amid reports that Pacquiao's manager, Sheriff Pelaez, lambasted both Arum and the fighter after the press conference that was held at the Manila Hotel (See sidebar).

Schaefer said that, while they understand that both Pacquiao and Barrera want to settle the rematch, Golden Boy doesn't want to be a hindrance to that and "would be willing to step (the fight) under a $10-M deal."

"We further agree to put the promotional rights and duties to the Pacquiao side of the deal into an escrow account until such time that the courts decide who the legal promoter of Pacquiao is," Schaefer said.

These profits, he said, would be either distributed to either Golden Boy or Top Rank.

"We now go to Manny Pacquiao to accept this deal, which, of course, substantially lowers than this fight going to a purse bid where Golden Boy would stand on the standard 75-25 split in favor of the champion, Marco Antonio Barrera," Schaefer said.

"We have the date, March 17. We have the site. The MGM Grand in Las Vegas and we have the HBO affiliation. Golden is substantially better than doing the fight a week before the De La Hoya-Mayweather showdown." Aaron L. Lagumbay, contributor

Finkel calls Pacman disloyal, hits Bob Arum

FINKEL (right) with Pacquiao.

ASHLEY HYDE, YESTERDAY SAID HE was disappointed over Manny Pacquiao's choice of promoter and alluded to some of Bob Arum's maneuvers as "false."

"Bob Arum is (a source) as usual," Finkel told Inquirer via e-mail. Finkel claimed Arum was required last August.

"The date of expiration is incorrect. A fighter always needs the right manager, so does a lawyer demand his time expiration contract."

Finkel said the right manager would not have let Pacquiao sign an contract.

"I told Manny how I got him out of his problems with Murad (Muhammad) and also the (Timothy) Bradley promotional contracts to no avail," Finkel said.

"I also told him how I got him for the second Morales fight twice as much as what he got for (the first) Morales (fight) which he lost. He told me I didn't need to remind him of what I did for him.

"I really like Manny and wish him well. But I can't help being angry at Manny for his lack of loyalty and his bad choices," Finkel stated.

13 coaches receive Asiad incentives

By Jose Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISsion yesterday released the cash incentives of coaches whose athletes bagged medals at the recent 17th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

DSC chair Wilfredo "Butch" Ramirez released a total of P3.99 million, as promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo to the 13 coaches from seven sports which gave the country a 4-8-9 gold-silver-bronze medal haul—its biggest in all years—at the Doha Asiad.

Topping the list of coaches is wushu's Antonio Co, which P750,000 as incentive for guiding Rene Catalan to the gold and Edward Peligrino to the silver in the men's fourchoo event.

Ricardo Arenas and Edgar Asentio of billiards bringed their bank accounts with P500,000 each after Antonio Gabica earned the gold in the 9-ball competition and the silver in the 8-ball event.

Jeffrey de Lunas's 9-ball silver—after he lost to Gabica—also contributed to the cash incentives of both coaches.

"The coaches are very well deserving of these incentives as much as the athletes are," said Ramirez. "They have always been behind the athletes in their unbelievable feat we also honor and recognize their achievements."

Boxing's Patrick Gorgui, Mohd Wasoe and Ronald Chavez received P300,000 each for helping Josie Toyo and Violito Payla win the gold, as top of the bronze medals won by Godfrey Gabito and Grandred Bandoy.

The incentives were provided by the government under Republic Act 9064. Known as the Sports Incentives Act, RA 9064 grants P1 million for gold, P500,000 for silver and P300,000 for bronze medalists in the Asian Games.

Under the same law, coaches are entitled to 50 percent of the athletes' rewards, which will also come from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Kazandra's David Jay earned P250,000 and his deputy Verolito Lara got P50,000 for leading Blake Maria Fullflore to the silver and Noel Ignacio to the bronze.

Stephen Hernandez, Roberto Cruz and Raul Soriano of Hidromado's finished their podium with P214,000.07 each while Martin Bilos of tennis and golf's Antonio Lopez earned P100,000 and P50,000, respectively.

The incentives of the coaches came after the 18 athletes who stood on the podium at the Doha Asiad received a total of P12.5 million, as provided by RA 9064, and the medal bonuses doled out by the President.

WESLEY So wins Indonesian GM Megaranto.

Wesley a point away from first GM norm

Standings after Round 7:

10 points—GM Pan Anti Hou; 9½—IM Wesley So, GM Tiong Nagaya (Ohio), GM Tony Dong (Ohio), IM Alex Qin (Ohio), GM Chirag Chhoi (Delhi) (the last 4 Ohio, GM Lenard Ann (Ohio); 6.5—GM Ha (Ohio), IM Ignacio Ani Cruz, Mexico, IM Ed Del Castillo, IM Ayakkumar Anbu; 5—IM Pan Pablo, FM Ada Pal Stone

FILIPINO WHIZ KID WESLEY SO DEMANDED on track for a Grandmaster norm after posting back-to-back wins from the sixth round of the Singapore Masters tournament at the Asian Chess Academy in the Lion City.

So, the 15-year-old Fide Master rode on Elo of 2611, cache but 3.5 points, just a point away from the GM norm.

He dubbed Indonesian GM Susanto Megaranto in the sixth round into Thursday and Citrus Li Chess (2566) in the seventh round.

He joined a seven-way tie for second place with Chinese-born Li Shilong, his eighth-round opponent, GM Zhang Pengxiang, IM Zhang Zhong, GM Ha Phon, GM Wei Ningjie and Vietnamese GM Le Quang Liem.

The GM bids of IM Yosa Rahida and FM John Paul Gomez, however, got stalled after both dropped their seventh-round matches.

Gomez bowed to Wu, the 1998 Asian junior champion, while Rahida lost to Vietnamese GM Le Quang Liem.

Rahida and Gomez dropped to a tie for 13th place with 4.5 point with 19 others. Marlon Fernandez, contributor

Renewal for two La Salle powerhouses

By Jaemion N. Reyes

THEIR HEARTS REBELLED AS THE SCENE GOT rougher, however, nothing was gallantly fought on.

That UAAP title chase denied the two La Salle's women's football and season's volleyball squads brought their championship dreams elsewhere.

"The girls took it hard," said football coach Rino Iboa. "They were crying. I told them the UAAP is just one tournament. But it's obvious because we were deprived of that five-peat. We were all looking forward to history."

It was, on the whole, a crew of renewal for the La Salle university sports program. On April 21, the Chiefs' board suspended La Salle for one year from all league sports for bidding two in-flight basketball players.

As a result, the crowns of the women's volleyball squad to bag a fourth straight title were forfeited.

"It was heartbreaking," said golfer Celine Sison Hernandez. "We're just thinking that we're killing ourselves for a league period of time. We're getting to know each other better on and off the court."

DENIED: The Lady Archers fail to defend crown. /P-1

True enough, the lay-off hardly affected La Salle's top form. The football squad bounced right back in the Shakey's National Open Championships in Batangas and the Dalhousie in Bacolod.

"We have proven a lot this year," noted Iboa. "The girls lived up to my expectations in the Dalhousie. We scored 36 goals and from no all our opponents, and this is our eighth straight title."

The volleyball squad, meanwhile, also rebounded from their disappointment. After collecting the crowns in the Shakey's V-League and Hyundai shows.

"Our women players kept telling us that whenever league season, we're supposed to give our best, even during training," said Hernandez.

However, their unsung showing failed to convince several promising players.

"Some batch-mates tried out over the summer," said Hernandez. "How we dried down from people coming in. Some are returned that their level of play would go down if they'll be out for one year."

Still, the coaching staff and the players managed to stay upbeat. "It's never easy for them to come out and be at their best all the time but it's why I still have to put play to their hearts delight," said Iboa.

"It's all about discipline. If we want to stay good or be greater in the next UAAP," added Hernandez.

Pagunsan bags Kukji golf title in sudden death

ASIAN TOUR VETERAN REY PAGUNSAN outlasted an eighth-year rival, 10 feet for birdies in the second playoff hole yesterday to win his fourth crown Orbon Diamond and complete a comeback from behind win to the Kukji Invitational Inc. pro-am tournament.

After moving to a final round four-under par 68 for a 36-hole 132 total in the short but tight Canlubang Apothekh layout, the 40-year-old Pagunsan knocked down the putt that anchored for the P 600,000 top prize.

PAGUNSAN

Pagunsan shot a 69 on Thursday and opened up with a double bogey-7 could further off.

He ended the rally by gunning down birdie in each of the next three holes after that, before bending down four more to the bookside which proved enough to catch Diamond on top.

Diamond, who shared a one-birdie in his version of 69 Thursday, drove to the hill two-hand rough in the second playoff hole, the par-5 eighth, and was forced to lay up. An attempt to birdie from the fringe dropping a good five to

Pagunsan then drove his tee shot to the right rough and was forced to lay up. He managed to get his third shot to the green but his 15-foot birdie attempt missed the cup.

Pagunsan then sank his par putt to end the match.

Pagunsan, who has won the Kukji Invitational in 2006, 2008 and 2010, also collected P 100,000 for his win.

Diamond, who finished with a 70 in the final round, settled for P 300,000 while Jonathan Fernandez of Orbon Diamond finished third with a 71 for P 200,000.

Mikee Pastidio struggled to card a 71 for fifth with a 136 total.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. DC2006-12-0014

REFRAMING A TRANSPARENT AND COMPETITIVE SYSTEM OF AWARDING SERVICE CONTRACTS FOR COAL, GEOTHERMAL AND PETROLEUM PROSPECTIVE AREAS, REPEALING FOR THIS PURPOSE DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 2003-10-005 AND DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 2000-08-004

WHEREAS, Section 7 of Presidential Decree No. 1442, otherwise known as "An Act to Promote the Exploration and Development of Coal Mineral Resources," Section 4 of Presidential Decree No. 972, as amended, otherwise known as "The Coal Development Act of 1976," and Section 4 of Presidential Decree No. 87, as amended, otherwise known as the "Oil Exploration and Development Act of 1972," allow the Philippine Government to directly undertake the exploration, development and production of the country's indigenous coal, geothermal and petroleum resources through service/operating contracts with contractors;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 9136, as amended, otherwise known as "The Department of Energy (DOE) Act of 1992," mandates the DOE to prepare, integrate, coordinate, supervise and control all plans, programs, projects and activities of the Government relative to energy exploration, development, utilization, distribution and conservation;

WHEREAS, on 13 May 2003 and 23 April 2003, the DOE issued Department Circular No. 2003-10-005 and DOC-04-004, respectively, both providing for transparent procedures and public contracting rules for awarding coal, geothermal and petroleum service/operating contracts;

WHEREAS, the DOE desires to adopt the most effective strategy for promoting and attracting local and foreign investment to further increase the exploration, development and production of prospective coal, geothermal and petroleum areas;

WHEREAS, the DOE, foreseeing and acknowledges the need to continue adopting a transparent and competitive system for awarding service/operating contracts for exploration, development and production of the country's coal, geothermal and petroleum resources;

WHEREAS, consistent with national interest, the DOE has, after consultation with stakeholders, established reference government participations through the promulgation of separate orders, in the exploration, development and production of indigenous oil and geothermal throughout the grant of appropriate FREE incentives packages in petroleum service contracts;

NOW, THEREFORE, on consideration of the aforementioned premises, the following provisions shall govern the transparent and competitive system of awarding service/operating contracts for coal, geothermal and petroleum exploration, development and production:

1. **Contracting Rounds:**
   1.1 The Energy Resource Development Bureau (ERDB) shall determine prospective coal, or geothermal or petroleum areas based on the Philippine territory and its maritime zones including the continental shelf for inclusion in the competitive public contracting rounds. The ERDB Secretary, upon the recommendation of the ERDB Director and the endorsement of the Contracting Committee (CC) created under Section 3 hereof, shall approve the commencement of the competitive public contracting rounds. The DOE shall not accept any application or proposals for exploration, development and production contract/ operating contract except during the competitive public contracting rounds. No applications for coal, geothermal and petroleum areas which shall not be scheduled in the offered areas shall be processed nor acted upon by the DOE without prior approval from above.
   1.2 The ERDB shall prepare the contracting round documentations with a description of available data and the geological, geophysical and petroleum resources in each area. The DOE Contract Negotiating Panel (DOE CNP per Departmental Order No. 2003-01-001) shall then do periodic information of the contracting round which shall include the following, among others, the following:
      a. Location Map and Technical Description (TDs) of the area/s being offered during the contracting round;
      b. Schedule of activities for the contracting round; and
      c. Such other information as the DOE may from time to time deem appropriate.
   1.3 Interested parties for the contracting rounds on petroleum areas/s even data available at DOE after payment of a Data Viewing Fee of Two Hundred United States Dollars (US$200.00) or a fee of its equivalent in the Philippine currency at the prevailing exchange rate, at the time viewing of data will be conducted in the premises of the Department of Energy.
   1.4 Interested parties for the contracting rounds on petroleum areas/s shall submit a letter of intent complete with the duly accomplished Pre-evaluation Form (PEF) to the DOE CNP. The DOE CNP may require submission of additional information/documents, as may be necessary, during evaluation of the proposals for clarification purposes only. A non-refundable application fee based on DOE's Schedule of Fees and Charges in compliance with DO 97-10* shall be paid by the applicant upon submission of the application/proposal which should include the following documents:
      a. Work Program
         a.1 Proposed eight(8) service contract, geothermal service contract or coal operating contract based on existing DOE Model Contracts;
         a.2 Proposed work program (discussion on the application of the different exploration strategies and methodologies to be employed in delineating energy resources in depth with corresponding work commitments) should be in detailed cartographic format and the timetable of activities in Gantt Charts and minimum expenditure on annual basis during each prospect activity with respect to the area or areas specified in the proposal; and
         a.3 Narrative presentation of data and information (such as geology, stratigraphy, geochemistry, geophysics, water or coal quality, resource estimate, resource estimate), the corresponding presence of energy resources in depth.
      b. Financial Proposal and Commitment
         b.1 Audited financial statements and annual reports for the last three (3) years;
         b.2 Duly filled out information sheet;
         b.3 Company profile of prospective contractor, its organization, shareholders or officers;
         b.4 Statement of the sum of financial resources available for the prospective contractor including capital, audit facilities, personnel and technology; and
         b.5 Certified copy of latest income/ business tax returns filed with the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and duly validated with the tax payment made thereon, if applicable.
      c. Legal Documentation
         c.1 Certified copy of articles of incorporation;
         c.2 Certified copy of the by-laws of the prospective contractor;
         c.3 SEC Registration Certificate; and
         c.4 Copies of latest general information sheet submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission.
      d. Technical Proposal and Documentation
         d.1 Particulars of the technical and industrial qualifications, eligibilities and work related experiences of the interested party and its employee/s;
         d.2 Particulars of the technical and industrial resources available to the interested party for the exploration, development and production of geothermal, coal and petroleum resources;
         d.3 Particulars on the organizations, achievements and track records of the interested party and its employees related to technical and industrial undertakings; and
         d.4 Particulars of organizational and management structure relative to Administrative, Financial and Technical aspects of the interested party.

         For financial, legal and technical documentation, if the interested party is a joint venture, all entities forming part of the joint venture shall comply with the above requirements. In addition, the interested party shall submit a copy of the joint venture agreement. Furthermore, any interested party, acting singly or forming part of a joint venture, that is organized as a foreign corporation shall submit documents required in the above. Aside to the appropriate governing body and duly authenticated by the Philippine consulate or any country where it is registered or where it operates.
   1.5 The DOE CNP shall open the submitted proposal/s relative to the contracting round during the first working day after the deadline for submission of proposal/s. Should there be any deficiency in the documents shall be assigned to the designated day of the opening of proposal.
   1.6 The DOE CNP shall then conduct evaluation of the submitted proposals based on the following criteria:
      a. Proposed work program — 40%
      b. Financial qualification — 20%
      c. Legal qualification — 20%
      d. Technical qualifications — 20%

      The DOE CNP, for sufficient and valid cause, may at any given time open any or all proposals submitted.
   1.7 The DOE shall discuss with the highest ranking prospect/s the terms of contract. Any material deviation from the submitted proposal shall be allowed at any given time. The DOE CNP shall then make a recommendation to the DOE Secretary for any award of service/operating contract/s based on the requirements contained. The DOE shall formally inform all the interested parties of the results of the evaluation.
2. **Contract Areas.** The definition and delineation of prospective coal, geothermal and petroleum contract areas shall be in accordance with the provisions of applicable government laws, rules and contracting procedures such as Presidential Decree Presidential Proclamation (PROCLAMATION) as and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), among others.
3. **Option for PNOC to participate in Petroleum Service Contracts.** The petroleum service contracts prepared under this Circular, an option shall be reserved for the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) for a maximum of ten percent (10%) equity participation in a petroleum service contract. The PNOC shall exercise its option to participate in a petroleum service contract within thirty (30) days after the winning proponent is determined. PNOC shall give proper notice to the winning proponent and the DOE within said thirty (30) days period.
4. **Separability Clause.** If for any reason, any section or provision of this Circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such part are affected shall be considered null force and effect.
5. **Repealing Clause.** The provisions of Department Circular No. 2003-10-005 and Department Circular No. 2000-08-004 are hereby repealed, with other department circulars, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.
6. **Effectivity.** This Circular shall take into effect immediately after publication at at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation and shall remain in effect until otherwise revoked.

Issued this 22nd day of December, 2006 in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd) RAPHAEL P.M. LOTILLA
Secretary

Gabica, De Luna team up in Tokyo

BY AGUSTIN KAMPER MEDALLETE
Antonio Gabica and Jeffrey de Luna shoot for the top prizes in the 2006 Mizer Crystal Shot Cup tandem-head (DBS) tournament today at the Conrad Nine Billiard hall in Tokyo, Japan.

Gabica and De Luna, the gold-silver medal winners in the Doha Asian Games, will team up and vie for the 1-million yen (around $8,400 or P430,000) champion's purse.

World-class trio Jose Gimenez-Talpei, Korea and Japan will also be competing in the one-day South Division-Conrad competition.

Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto Echiverri said the trophies of Gabica and De Luna is a good omen.

"They can very much relate with rush rollers, which is necessary in a seven (7)-rushes competition," said Echiverri.

The Seventh Doubles format requires teammates to take a shot alternately whether they make or miss the pocket.

"They practice together. I think they have a pretty strong chance of winning the championship," added Echiverri.

For their first assignment, Gabica and De Luna must handle former world champion Wu Chia Ching and Yang Ching-Shun of Chinese Taipei in the two-hour limited time race.

Yang and Wu, together with former world pool titlist Feng Feng Chiu, were the top three finishers in the 2006 Super Cup in Taipei.

Gimenez moves at 4:40 am local para makapagbigay sulat ng kanyangkan sa ating bansa (He will do our best to bring home once again to our country)," the 34-year-old Gabica said.

ANTONIO Gabica (right) and Jeff De Luna celebrate during the Doha feats.

Gabica delivered for Luna in the 9-ball singles finals to bag the gold medal for the 16th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar. He also secured a all-win in the 8-ball competition to emerge as the most successful Filipino athlete in the regional meet.

On the other side of the draw, former world champion Ramilito Tibrio and 17-year-old Marvin Higuit of Japan will go up against Jeong Young-Hwa and Bin Woong-Jae of Korea.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Pacman's polish, a pregnant pause

By Percy D. Dello

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—From ethanol laser to handbags. From the tropics to the arctic.

I'm lost. In California capital, among Arnold's small army of public information officers.

At the doors of a new Schwarzenegger administration. All looking for the capacity or the seat.

Here the governor's energy advisor is not going out back yet again to an retirement in Asia or Tanzania. Foreigners. Caroline City. Korea Inc.

It used to be too shabby either to carry any shoes of the well-heeled lawyers and lung-cap economy office.

Rain, sometimes in torrents, has come in quiet since Christmas. With this cold air that blows from the Sierra Nevadas, late autumn has become a bit bite.

Anyway, we're not the snow or heard.

* * *

Area Olympian Hyomie Sarabeda just keeps punching as he could fight at his next session, possibly in May for the biggest fight that can be made in boxing—the Oscar de la Hoya vs Floyd Mayweather jr. match on HBO pay-per-view.

Sarabeda, dubbed Sacramento's last best hope for boxing glory, defended Asian bodyguard of honor, Mendoza normally.

The pay-per-view was supposed to be sure picking, but knockout-conqueror Ina opponent is seemingly quick instead of using his boxing skills. Both fighters seem to like can win in the third. More embarrassed than hurt. Sarabeda, the 2004 Olympian, finally sent his agency scrambling to the canvas for good, 56-seconds left in the next round.

Trainer Freddie Roach credits his relatively 7-0 knockout record for the boxer's ability to turn the fight around quickly.

Sarabeda, who fights at 122 pounds, locum credits his victory to Manny Pacquiao's polish. He said he learned to stay in the moment during his idol as Pacquiao's primary sparring partner for the Filipino champion's recent third-round knockout of Erik Morales in Las Vegas.

* * *

Entertainment Carlo Claire Alcaraz and Gerby Goodman recently bought the Los Angeles Sparks WNBA franchise from Dr. Jerry Buss for reported $10 million.

Moreover had the premiere update at their introductory news conference that the team's franchise player made an announcement of her own.

She's pregnant.

Lisa Leslie said she's two months in the family way and will miss the first season of the new owners. Leslie said, and she could not say if she will ever play in Los Angeles again.

"Obviously," wrote Los Angeles Times columnist Bill Plaschke in his own inimitable way, "it was a little more exciting that Inspiron is available on an Odyssey story. This is a sweet and vibrant."

Wrote Plaschke:

"The new owners just paid $10 million for a team that is currently in disarray. They just bought a 0-9 million house with no electricity. They are installing on the most difficult sports sales mission in this city and, oh, by the way, they just lost their only recognizable asset."

Said the new era, Lisa Leslie. Have to help you, Owner Buyers and Good note, "The retirement ahhd.

* * *

Sometime other than the Lakers' Kobe Bryant hit for 60 points last December 30th.

The latest to earn repeat renewal, it was Gilbert Arenas of the Washington Wizards who beat the Lakers 147-143 in overtime, despite Kobe's 43 points, 10 rebound and eight assist productions. The Lakers had not allowed a player to score as many points against them since 1986 Chamberlain had 100 in Hershey 1990.

Arenas, one of the many players overlooked by LA in the draft, was a local basketball standout at Simi Valley's Royal High School in the San Fernando Valley area of LA.

COMMENTARY

CAGE CHAMPS
Players and coaches of both the Mapua College girls' basketball team open for picture by after downing Centennial of Learners' Foundation, 58-19, and crowning the revived NCR Farmers Basketball League championship at the Blue Eagle Gym in Katipunan, Quezon City. The FBL was backed by Jessel Bros. Mike, Bacnotan - Pizzarro Multi-Inclusions and Accord Capital.

SPORTSWATCH

100 fights in LP 4-cocker

SAN FRANCISCO, JUNE 30 OF COCKFIGHTS SCHEDULED FROM A WHOLE FIELD OF 251 will then eight-to-be Philippine gamefowl cocks in today's championship round of Pasasiklaban Sabungan Sa Lahat Cup No. 4 at the Manila Cockers Festival up by King Derby Asia and Don Modesto Dimamay Jr. Arena. Thirty-eight matchups at 3 p.m. start today at Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

Among those who qualified in the Derby Asia, Jesus Lucas, Bombay Chua (two entries), Raymond Mateo, Jr. Llanes and Don Dimamay.

Filipinos vs American breeders in NCA World Championship Derby

TOP FILIPINO AND AMERICAN gamefowl breeders and cockfighting enthusiasts will battle it out in the National Cockers' Association (NCA) World Championship Derby on Jan. 9, 11 and 13 at the Pasay City Cockpit.

The participation of the two best Filipino and American cockers in the derby closes why the NCA World Championship, sponsored by Singapore Competition is widely hailed as the toughest and most prestigious derby in the world.

Many breeders Larry Hildebrand, Joe Wilcott, Tim Cooper, Eddie Odell, Dan Gray and Jeff Budgetta are confident of beating their Filipino counterparts, as do San Francisco's Larry Baldwin and Filipinos Frans Medina and Ric Bernardino.

The other top names are Gene Batta, Jimbo Cox, Dolores Perkins, Andy Robinson, Rod Lawson, Ray Morrison, Richard Burris, Chuck Hulbert, Richard Lasher, Rod Stout, Anne Campbell, Brent Cochran, Jon Anderson and Gene Gaines.

The Filipinos, however, are ready to give the Americans a tough fight.

Among the top local bets are Hilario Pacquiao, Romeo Bevilla, Pepe Jugo Alcaraz, Hawks Cockers, Go Hi Trades, Inc., Bonnie Pozo, Jun Santiago, Edwin Abella, Boy Jose, Rudy Alfonso, Dueling Cockpingers, Rand Villanueva, brothers Eddie and Bobby Acuzar, Ronald Antonio, brothers Rudy and Manuel Evans, and Pat Magsaysay.

Dirk jumper caps mighty Mavs rally

Iverson gifts coach Karl 800th win

DALLAS—DIRK NOWITZKI HIT a 19-foot jumper with 1.3 seconds left and the Dallas Mavericks rallied to beat the Phoenix Suns, 103-99, on Thursday night for their eighth straight victory.

Nowitzki took a pass on the right wing from Jason Terry and made the shot over Shawn Marion. The Suns had one more chance after a timeout and the inbound pass, but Steve Nash's turnaround shot bounded off the front of the rim as time expired. That ended Phoenix's eight-game road winning streak.

Nash had 27 points and 10 rebounds, while Diamond finished with 16 points and 12 rebounds. Stoudemire scored 25 points, and Nash finished with 24 points—on 10-of-18 shooting—and 13 assists for the Suns.

At San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 22 points. Tim Duncan added 20 and San Antonio forced its 15th consecutive home victory over Utah, 106-83.

Parker hit all five of his shots from the floor and scored 12 points in the second quarter as the Spurs caused a one-point lead into a 11-point advantage at halftime.

In Detroit, Jerry Sloan said couldn't have drawn up his 800th win any better—playing short-handed, making up plays on the fly in 11-minute, inclement weather rounds.

This was his kind of game. That's why the Muggsies coach was off stealth after getting his milestone victory in Denver's 112-99 win over the fourth Superfriends...his former team—on Thursday night.

Karl was handed a Denver jersey with No. 800 on it along with the game ball after beating the Nuggets to become only the 12th coach in NBA history to reach the 800-win mark.

"Tonight's game was fun because I thought we ran the offense—they never ran the correct days tonight. But very nice to win the game," said Karl, who's 800-331 in 19 seasons.

Karl has a supporter in Allen Iverson, who finished with 44 points and 10 assists. Iverson had his highest scoring game since being acquired by Denver via trade with Philadelphia on Dec. 19. His season high is 46 against Chicago on Nov. 16.

"He's good," Karl said. "He's better than I thought and I thought he was [darn] good."

After coming out of the lineup with 1 shot remaining, Iverson said Karl had a brief conversation with him before a quick hug.

"To be a part of something like this is something to cherish," Iverson said. "It was an honor to help him get that win."

Grizzlies fire Fratello

Memphis, Tennessee—The 0-16th Memphis Grizzlies fired coach Mike Fratello on Thursday after an NBA record 6-24 start.

The Grizzlies' career winningest coach, Fratello had a 99-80 record and had guided Memphis to its only two playoff appearances. Tony Barone Jr., the Grizzlies' director of player personnel, was selected to be the interim coach.

Fratello, married to the season ruthless 68 days went to Pete Carroll of Spain, who broke his foot this summer to be sacked championships. AP

NOWITZKI screamingjoy cheers after nailing the game-winning bucket.

Yao, probable All-Star game absentee, leading vote-getter

HOUSTON ROCKETS CENTER Yao Ming, sidelined by a broken leg, is headed for overwhelming fan support for the NBA All-Star game, to be held in Las Vegas on Feb. 18.

Yao has 1,611,922 votes and boasts a huge edge over Shaquille O'Neal of Miami Heat center (489,642) at his position.

But the 7-foot-6 Chinese center, who is having the best season of his career, broke his right leg against the Los Angeles Clippers on Nov. 27 and is unlikely to return before the All-Star Game, meaning he will almost certainly miss the mid-season exhibition for the first time in his NBA career.

No one would miss the starting lineup the past four years.

Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant is second among vote-getters in the West, with 1,167,019 votes, followed by Houston's Tracy McGrady (1,007,877) and Denver's escort Jumpy from the East. After Jerome (197,319).

There is a three-way at forward in the West, where Minnesota's Kevin Garnett (745,865), San Antonio's Tim Duncan (715,455) and Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki (694,620) are separated by little more than 100,000 votes.

Phil Jackson's move from Philadelphia, New Jersey's Vince Carter has climbed into the top two among Eastern Conference guards in the second vital returns of the voting.

The New Jersey Nets' leading scorer, Carter trailed Iverson and Miami Heat superstar Dwyane Wade when the league released the first balloting returns two weeks ago.

But Iverson, who was sitting idly on the trading block at the time, has since undergone a dramatic change. The four-time scoring champion was dismissed from the Eastern lead for after being dealt to the Nuggets on Dec. 20.

Since the 31th All-Star in 1976, only one player—Carter, in 2005—was traded before the Game and was still voted to start. AP

VAN Dunkelsuperstar

Hurting Wade day-to-day case

MIAMI—PLAYERS TESTS ON THURSDAY confirmed the worst injury of Shaquille but guard Dwyane Wade is a question, and he will be a game-time decision for Friday's National Basketball Association game against New Jersey.

Wade, who was named the Most Valuable Player of the NBA Finals last June as the Heat thwarted Dallas to claim the title, was hurt with his left knee bruised by Desmond Mason's dunk on Wednesday's 109-102 loss to Chicago.

The 24-year-old underwent an X-ray on Wednesday that indicated a sprain and an MRI on Thursday confirmed the diagnosis.

A two-time All-Star, Wade is averaging 23.0 points and 6.2 assists per game in 25 games this season. He currently leads all Eastern Conference guards in all four votes.

Thanks to the brilliant play of Wade, the Heat stormed to their first championship last June. But the Heat have fallen on hard times this season, losing to embarrassing finishes in Chicago on the opening night of the season and dropping eight of their first 12 games.

Miami already is without All-Star center Shaquille O'Neal, who is still sidelined with torn knee cartilage. AFP

YEARENDER

Zidane's fall from grace; drug cheat Landis top stories

LONDON—REMMY THROUGH corny time in the soccer World Cup final, Zinedine Zidane was majestically in head the goal designed to claim the trophy for France.

Instead, the consistently excellent Italian keeper Gianluigi Buffon arched high to tip the ball over-headed over the bar and preserve the 1-1 scoreline.

What subsequently passed through Zidane's mind in the dying moments of extra time had been taken from the backstreets of Marseille to the glamour-use European club games Juventus and Real Madrid?

Confounding the pessimists, he had gradually recuperated the form which propelled France to their 1998 World Cup triumph. But after Buffon's save, he must have known his final chance of glory on the game's ultimate stage had effectively vanished.

Certainly something stopped 10 minutes before the final when he ran the Berlin Olympic stadium.

After a brief altercation, the Frenchman suddenly head-butted Marco Materazzi in the chest and was sent from the field. Zidane's unprovoked exit from the scoreless 9-1, in the penalty shoot-out.

Zidane's abrupt fall from grace was one the highs and slumps of a wonderful sporting year.

In July it was announced that Tour de France winner Floyd Landis and Olympic 100 meters champion Justin Gatlin had tested positive for the male sex hormone testosterone.

Landis's failed test followed an astonishing win in the 17th stage after the American had apparently dropped out of contention on the previous day.

The Tour had already lost what little credibility it still retained when the 1997 winner Jan Ullrich and Operación Puerto champion Ivan Basso were withdrawn by their teams as a result of a Spanish doping investigation.

Because of Gatlin's positive test, track fans have been denied the showdowns they craved against Jamaican rivals Powell, who equaled his own 100 meters world record more than year. Reuters

Hingis to tie knot with Czech star Stepanek

ZURICH—FORMER WORLD number one Martina Hingis is to marry Czech tennis player Radek Stepanek.

The 26-year-old Hingis confirmed news of her engagement at a media conference at the Gold Coast on Friday where she is preparing to play the Australian women's hardcourt championships.

Hingis said: 28-year-old Stepanek, ranked 19th in the world, had proposed to her in Prague last month. It was not until she arrived in Australia that anyone noticed her diamond ring.

"I was surprised when it was spotted right away because in Switzerland I've been nothing around for so much and no one's said anything," she told reporters.

"I guess people here pay more attention to things."

Hingis dominated women's tennis in the late 1990s, winning the Australian Open three times in a row from 1997 to 1999 before injuries and foot injuries forced her to nearly retirement in 2002.

She took three years off before making a comeback last year, flying among the names ranked in the world's top 114.

Stepanek will make a comeback of his own at next week's Australian men's hardcourt championships in Adelaide. He reached the quarterfinals at Wimbledon this year but has not played since after dislocating a disc in his neck. Reuters

HINGIS Engaged

Roger has same aim next year: Win French

PARIS—TENNIS DISTRACTS MAJOR champs in 2007 but Roger Federer's pronounced New Year resolution remains the same—to win the French Open.

The Swiss super was ranked up another record-smashing year in 2006 with 12 titles, a 92-5 match record in which he won back his first widow Open title and defended his Wimbledon and US Open crowns.

But the French Open small eludes him.

FEDERER

"It's obviously my goal to win it," said the world number one.

"I got a step closer in 2006. I think every year I feel going to get closer again more mature to win this tournament."

Victory on the federal Centre clay in June would make him only the sixth man in captures all four Grand Slams, but he has run every it's been eventual champion Rafael Nadal who has stood in his way.

The muscular Spaniard starts the new season, with the beginning of 2006, fully fit, but is at the slump.

A crippling foot injury ruled the world number two out of the first six weeks of this year, an absence which also included the opening Grand Slam event in Australia.

But in 2007, the 19-year-old champion is wearing no time to his build up to the Melbourne. He begins his season on Jan. 1 at the Chennai Open and then travels to Sydney. AFP

MLB union challenges new anti-drug ruling

LOS ANGELES—THE MAJOR League Baseball Players Association (Monday Authority) would challenge an appeals court ruling giving investigators access to supplements, multibillion-dollar testing records of some of its members.

A three-judge panel of the 9th 120 Circuit Court of Appeal, hearing the case of the United States ry Comprehensive Drug Testing Inc., said Wednesday that baseball's courts erred in blocking access to the information.

The results of the tests conducted by Major League Baseball in 2003 could provide evidence against baseball's top players—stars who testified to a grand jury in the BALCO steroid scandal—including San Francisco Giants slugger Barry Bonds—connected perjury.

Separately, the players union and two laboratories involved, Quest Diagnostics and Comprehensive Drug Testing Inc., argued that seizure of the records violated players rights.

"We respectfully disagree with the two judges who comprised the majority in this case," union executive director Donald Fehr said in a statement issued on Thursday. "As the dissent noted, if this opinion is allowed to stand it will effectively repeal the Fourth Amendment for non-federal electronic records.

"Under a search warrant seeking information about only 11 baseball players, confidential records for many players were seized, with confidential records of thousands of other people with no connection to baseball, including many with no association to steroids.

"The government seeks to retain all of this information about thousands of people who were not the subject of any criminal inquiry. AFP

Finishing race a victory in itself, says Wild Oats skipper

SYDNEY—THE SKIPPER OF THE MAXI that won the treacherous Sydney to Hobart yacht race said Friday that crossing the line in one piece was a major victory after nine boats were abandoned or retired.

Mark Richards, who skippered Wild Oats XI to a historic hat-to-hat victory Thursday after some two days and nine hours of racing, said he was happy the boat and crew had survived the grueling race.

"It's a rough race out there," he told reporters in Hobart. "Really rough conditions, a lot of casualties, a lot of damage but Wild Oats came through unscathed."

Wild Oats was only the sixth yacht to win consecutive Sydney to Hobart races since the competition's inception in 1945, and was the first to do so since it achieved the feat in 1963 and 1964.

The 30-meter (100 foot) boat crossed the Battery Point finish line in Hobart at 9:52 pm (1352 GMT), clocking a time of two days, eight hours, 52 minutes and 23 seconds of racing and arriving four hours ahead of its closest rival.

Shortly before 2 am Friday 39-footer Ichi Ban and maxi Shumba took second and third line honors just 16 minutes apart.

Rough weather on the first night of racing left several of the 79-strong fleet retiring, with one competitor sunk and eight others forced to retire.

Wild Oats took the lead in the early stages of the race but temporarily slipped back behind rival maxi Shumba and the 21-meter ABN Amro before both were recovered on the rough weather before Sydney Wednesday.

Six crew members on the Maxima were injured when the mast and rigging crashed to the water. AFP

SPORTS

RP team posts Asian U-19 rugby romp

THE PHILIPPINES SCORED its first international major triumph in a sport that's still trying to make a headway at home—rugby.

An RP Under-19 squad swept all its three matches in the Asian Championships in Chinese Taipei recently to bag the Division II title over Brunei, Guam and the Asian Gulf.

The RP squad scored a total of 13 tries to defeats for an overall record of 97-13, including a 64-0 decision of Brunei in the tiltwinner's second assignment.

Matthew Saxonhuis led the RP assault by scoring five touchdowns followed by Andrew Barbastro, who had two.

The victory also gave local officials hope that the RP team will be promoted to Division A action to start next year's Asian championships, where powerhouses nations like Japan and South Korea hold sway.

Gareth Hidgins, Jacob Wood, Jake Lewis, James Young, Joseph Bakker and Iain Martin were the other touchdown scorers for the Philippines.

The RP squad blasted Guam, 12-3, and whipped Arabian Gulf, 21-20.

MEMBERS of the RP squad celebrate their Asian Championship Group B victory.

Escares outduels Malaysian in Jr Cup

MIKE ESCARES FINALLY pitched the bubble of hopes Commotion to the Mito Junior Tennis Cup with a 6-4, 7-5 win yesterday against Agustine Chang of Malaysia's Sarawak State at the Philsports Tennis Club in Quezon City.

Escares dispatched the rookie 20-under title today with Vince Mark Taborada, a budding age-grouper from Tuburan in Cebu, who topped Vince Sabal 6-2, 7-6.

And with no foreign entry in the draw, Efren Talampul tangles with Jacob Lagunzad for the boys' 12-under trophy, while Grandville Faulmino of Olongapo City meets Marion Capadocia for the girls' 12-under jewel.

In the boys' 14-under division, Ian Tobaro pipped Jose Lorenzo Berner 6-4, 7-5 and Jun Dimalo edged Kyle Cordoza 6-4, 6-4 to arrange an all-Lagao Final.

Isha Mendiorel blasted Ojama Marmeyel 6-0, 6-0 to join a championship tear against Iyngo Tennis Club teammate Ryoko Sasaki, a similar 6-0, 6-0 victor past Jella Capadocia in the girls' 14 under.

Pinoys bag 2 Para golds

THE PHILIPPINES COLLECTED a 2-3-7-14 gold-silver-bronze medal haul for its best finish in the Asian Paralympic Games, the coaches said Good field less than a week after the Doha Asian games.

Boxrabbers Aurelio Mingatan and swimmer Daniel Dumaan ruled their respective events to lead the 41-member Philippine contingent.

"We actually saw medals in all the events we competed in," said Hiko Rosvida, president of the Philippine Sports Association for Differently Abled (Philpasda), during yesterday's Send-off Party at the Rainforest Restaurant in Pasay Town.

GOLDEN SWEEP Kristyn Maniel Fenadan, representing Gymnastics Center of the Philippines, shows the form that carried her to a sweep of the five gold medals at stake in the 6-9 age class (Level 1) of women's artistic gymnastics at the recent Mila 20th Rosa Ilarina Gymnastics Cup. The nine-year-old Parañaque pointed a total score of 21.20 in topping the floor exercise, horse vault, balance beam and uneven bars. That also gave her the meaning victory in the all-around exercises. The one-day tournament, backed by Mila as part of its grassroots sports development program, drew teams from schools and gymnastics clubs in Metro Manila.

KONIKA MINOLTA PRO-AM

Cantada, Tanpinco gun for 4th straight crown

GERALD CANTADA AND JR TANPINCO WILL be back to defend their crown in the Konika Minolta Pro-Am Championships set Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at The Master's Legacy in Silang, Cavite.

"I have worried word that JR will take a break from his studies in the United States for us to be able to defend our crown," said Cantada.

Cantada and Tanpinco recorded history last year when they scored a third straight victory in the tournament.

Guillermo B. Brion, the Lilis Corp. founder and Konica Minolta franchisee who revived the fabled Pro-Am in 2002, welcomed the defending Cantada and Tanpinco.

"Their decision to come back bodes well to our tournament that really appreciates quality players as well as professionals of our participants," said Brion.

The winners will pocket close to P500,000 in the P1.7-million tournament that allows a professional and an amateur to hit one ball alternately from tee to green.

Brion received the event together with the Tagaytay Golf Association of the Philippines and Hosted by Talamig, a founding member of the Pro-Am in 1998, after it got shelved following the privatization of San Miguel Corp. Among its past champions was Ben Arda, who died just very recently while working at a coaching gig at Alabang.

The first winners in its revival in 2002 were professionals Ned Hampton and amateur Kevin Nielsen. The pair is expected to be back next month.

The Milluca brothers, Raul and Raul, were the second athlete before Cantada and Tanpinco established to win the next three tournaments.

Aside from the prize money, this year's duals staging of the event offers a Toyota vehicle as a hole-in-one prize.

A Celebrity Pro-Am will precede the tournament sponsored chiefly by Geppali, Bichali C250 trailers, Pro Probe Synthetic Spirits, Hair, Bentley, Casio, Chanson, SwissMiliaire, Tee, adidas, Brion Golf and Merry Maids.

For inquiries, call the MGAP at 525-6987, 525-5044 and 525-1294, or The Masters at 888-9127, (046) 414-2888, (046) 414-2827 and 888-9001.

BUSINESS

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Peso ends year up 7.6% against the dollar

Friday close of 49.03 highest in nearly 6 years

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO ENDED 2006 ON A HIGH NOTE ALONGSIDE favorable economic prospects and a seasonal surge in overseas remittances, gaining 7.6 percent or about P4 since the start of the year to close at 49.03 to a dollar yesterday.

Sharing the year's last trading day the local currency hit an intra-day peak of 49.02, its strongest in nearly six years, before closing at 49.03 or up by 7 centavos from Thursday's finish of 49.10 against the greenback.

The Philippines' decision to pursue a new program involving the International Monetary Fund with the preparation of remaining debts until the Fund also contributed to the upbeat market sentiment.

"The peso continued to gain ground versus the US dollar following actual and

PESO/B4

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Gov't to tap local market for funds** /B2
■ **S&P says debt ratios key to credit-rating upgrade** /B8
■ **BIR extends program for delinquent taxpayers to Jan. 31** /B8

December inflation seen below 4.7%

INFLATION LIKELY SOFTENED FURTHER IN December from the 4.7 percent rate posted in November, aided by the appreciating peso and the stabilizing petroleum prices, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the inflation rate for the last month of the year likely tapered off to a low of 4.2 percent and, at most, at 4.6 percent.

"Actual inflation in December is expected to be slightly lower compared to November due to the subsiding base effects alongside the continued strengthening of the peso and stable retail prices of domestic petroleum products," Tetangco said.

The economy's inflation rate during the first 11 months of the year averaged at 5.4 percent, lower than the 7.7 percent a year ago.

"The decelerating inflation allowed the BSP to keep its policy rates unchanged at 7.5 percent (for overnight borrowing) and 9.75 percent (for overnight lending) in 2006, after a round of policy-tightening measures in 2005," Tetangco said in a statement.

"The BSP adopted a 'letting inflation go harder' phenomenon with the BSP in November to encourage banks to free up excess funds for lending and spur business activity," he said.

Tiering is a system wherein the BSP pays a lower rate on short-term money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels to encourage banks to lend out instead of park all their funds with the monetary authority.

Under this system, only the first P5 billion of short-term money placed with the BSP will be paid the overnight borrowing rate (currently at 7.5 percent). The next P5 billion will earn 200 basis points less than the published rate (5.5 percent) and placements in excess of P10 billion will yield 400 basis points less (3.5 percent).

The BSP earlier announced an inflation rate target of 4 percent in 2006, assuming the ex-

DECEMBER/B4

See more market news on Page B2.

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.20 PERCENT higher yesterday for the least bloody in almost 10 years due to continued bullish sentiment over the economic prospects for 2007, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 55.78 points to close at the day's highest 2,802.42. It earlier hit a low of 2,768.54 points.

Trading its best finish since April 7, 1998 when it settled at 2,888.06, the index

rose Page B1

AFP

Gov't to tap local market for funds

₱63B in securities to be issued in 1st quarter of '07

By Michelle V. Rama

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT will borrow ₱63 billion from the domestic capital market in the first quarter of 2007, through the issuance of government securities, to help fund its expenditure requirements next year.

Borrowings of the government are used to pay off maturing obligations and fund programs and projects that could not be covered by revenue collection.

The borrowing program for the first quarter of next year will be 5 percent less than the ₱66.317 billion executed in the same period for 2006.

The Bureau of the Treasury said that of the total domestic borrowings programmed for the first three months of next year, ₱49 billion will be raised through the sale of T-bills, while the remaining ₱39 billion will come in the form of T-bond sale.

T-bills are short-term government securities with maturities of one year or less, while T-bonds have longer tenors.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government would issue more T-bonds and less T-bills next year, due to the market's preference for higher yielding debt instruments.

Under the first quarter borrowing schedule, auctions for T-bills will be held every other Wednesday starting Jan. 10.

The government will issue 91-day T-bills worth ₱1.5 billion, 182-day T-bills worth ₱3 billion and 364-day T-bills worth ₱5 billion every auction date.

Auctions for T-bonds will be held every other Thursday starting Jan. 11.

The government will issue ₱6.05 billion worth of 10-year bonds on Jan. 11, ₱5 billion worth of 7-year bonds on Feb. 1, ₱6 billion worth of 5-year bonds on Feb. 13, ₱7 billion worth of 7-year bonds on March 1, ₱9 billion worth of 10-year bonds on March 15, and ₱7 billion worth of 20-year bonds on March 29.

The domestic borrowing program for the first quarter of 2007 will be part of the ₱268.1 billion worth of total domestic borrowings earmarked for the entire year.

Next year, the government plans to borrow a total of ₱500.61 billion, apart from the ₱268.1 billion in domestic borrowings, the government has also set a foreign borrowing program worth ₱130.5 billion to ₱133 billion.

The domestic and foreign borrowings for 2007 translates to a borrowing source mix of 33:67 in favor of domestic sources.

The government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from the domestic capital market to minimize exposure to foreign exchange risks brought about by fluctuations of the exchange rates.

Now year's domestic borrowing program of ₱268.1 billion will be 5 percent higher than the estimated domestic borrowing of ₱247 billion this year. On the other hand, next year's ₱130.5 billion to ₱133 billion foreign borrowing program will be 17.5 percent lower than the estimated ₱4 billion this year.

"The full-year borrowing program of the national government (for 2007) is less (than that of 2006), given the decline in the programmed deficit for 2007," the BTr said.

The government has set a deficit ceiling of only ₱63 billion for next year, lower than the projected ₱86 billion in P90 billion in 2006. The projected decline in this deficit is an offshoot to a proposed increase in revenue collection and tighter spending.

Coca-Cola unit sold for $590M, says SMC

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SOUTHEAST ASIAN LIBATION brand and beverage firm San Miguel Corp. said it had sold its entire 60-percent stake in its soft drinks unit to the Coca-Cola Company for $590 million.

The sale has been previously announced, but the amount of the deal was not disclosed.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) yesterday, San Miguel said it had decided to let go of its soft drinks and distilled water businesses under Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. so that it could attain "longer-term commercial flexibility."

CCBPI is the holding firm for manufacturing beverage company Philippine Beverage Partners Inc., and Coca-Cola Bottling Corp., the manufacturers of local soft drink brands.

The transaction amount of $590 million is subject to adjustments. The completion of the closing activities of the CCBPI Group of Companies, and the completion by San Miguel and the Coca-Cola Company with the provisions of a "transition service agreement" and a "cooperation agreement."

Both San Miguel and Coca-Cola have agreed to a transition service agreement whereby San Miguel will continue to provide services to Coca-Cola for a maximum of 18 months to enable the world's largest soft drinks maker to assume management of CCBPI.

Also, under the cooperation agreement, San Miguel has committed not to produce for itself and for certain competitors of Coca-Cola considerable drinks anywhere in the world for 5 years from the close of the deal, and for 5 years in the Philippines.

Despite its exit, San Miguel will continue its position beverages through its other investments in Beer Ltd. and Del Monte Stable Ltd. With a report from Reuters

Singapore gov't firm gets 6.3% stake in PNOC-EDC

THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPore Investment Corp. Pte Ltd. (GIC) yesterday said it had acquired a 6.28 percent stake in energy firm and new market debutante PNOC Energy Development Corp.

In separate, GIC said that it now owns 917.48 million PNOC-EDC shares.

GIC is a global investment management firm which the Government of Singapore established in 1981 for the country's foreign reserves.

With a network of seven offices in key financial capitals around the world, GIC invests in equities, fixed income, foreign exchange, commodities, money markets, alternative investments, real estate and private equity, according to the company's website.

PNOC-EDC, closed at ₱4.05 yesterday. The firm this year conducted the biggest initial public offer in the listed stock exchange.

Last Dec. 4, GIC participated in PNOC-EDC's IPO by a total of 606.62 million shares @ ₱3.35 a share. On Dec. 12, GIC also bought 195.71 million shares at ₱4.22/share.

PNOC-EDC's stock was sharply on its trading debut. It jumped to as high as ₱4.55 in early GIC-is, limited again ₱4.05/share, its share-offer raising ₱15.7 billion from its IPO of up to 5.2 billion primary and secondary shares.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Sun Life records robust growth

SUN LIFE FINANCIAL PHILIPpines recorded robust growth in all its business lines in 2006.

In a statement, the company said its personal, asset management and life insurance businesses moved up in their respective rankings over the past 11 months.

From 12th place in the pre-need industry 10 months ago, Sun life Financial Plans Inc. (SLFPI) had posted steady growth, eventually snatching the top position from the previous leader by August this year.

In terms of "total cash bought in" (TCBI), the pre-need market leadership that month with a 23-percent market share.

The company also said it had garnered the highest "persistency score among all pre-need companies in 2006 at 96.5 percent, based on data gathered and computed by the Actuarial Society of the Philippines."

Persistency scores measure the percentage of clients who completed their first year premium payments and continued to pay their premiums on the second year of their terms. The industry's average persistency rating is 72 percent.

Sun Life's mutual fund company, Sun Life Asset Management Co., placed second in terms of gross sales (from SLAMCI's own asset-gathering assets worth ₱11 billion, up from ₱7 billion as of end-2005).

While the company's life insurance business continues to be a strong second in its terms, sales of Sun Life of Canada (Philippines) Inc. during the recent year-on-growth, rarely over last year's level. For November alone, SLOCP's sales force registered a performance that delivered 103 percent of its target in terms of agency-credits, the company said.

Sun Life Financial Plans is a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies, a leading international financial services organization. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAYING CHEESE WITH THE BIG CHEESE
US President George W. Bush joins the Philippine representatives to the Apec Business Advisory Council (from left) Benny Antiporda, Antonio R. Moncada and Doris Magsaysay Ho during the recently concluded Asia-Pacific Economic Conference meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam. Also, in the picture are Apec officials, which traditionally holds a meeting simultaneously with the Apec summit and submits recommendations to Apec leaders during the annual dialogue.

Peso ends year . . .

From page B1

anticipated foreign exchange inflows," Bangko Central ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. is.

Aside from the influx of remittances from overseas Filipino workers which usually have their yearly January more dollars are pouring into the country given a strong appetite for local stocks.

"The rally might extend until the first quarter of 2007, with portfolio inflows which could drive up the main share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index to 1,000 and further to 1,200 next year," said finance do Gee Investment Bank chief strategist Jonathan Bawalan.

"So I guess this is brought about by fiscal reforms, which enabled the government to do more budget-deficit programmes," Bawalan said.

He said the markets would once run the next hurdle at 49.31. By next year, he said the peso should trade to as high as 48 to as low as 52-81, given political uncertainties arising from the May election.

Bawalan said the stock cross sees stock for interest rate yields would also remain lean to head lower possibly by around 25 to 50 basis points in the week.

"However, election-related uncertainties in the markets next would provides a pause in the downtrend in interest rates and may see some bottoming out toward the end of the first quarter," he said.

Meanwhile, the BSP has welcomed the Philippines' decision to immediately settle $220 million in loans to the Asian Development Bank in order to pave the way for an early graduation from the IPM arrangement with the fund.

BSP acting managing director Edmundo Reyes said: "The Philippines' ability to repay the Fund early reflects a stronger balance-of-payments position, achieved through impressive fiscal reforms that have substantially reduced the fiscal deficit and debt."

December . . .

From page B1

percent slowdown in consumer prices back to the targeted path next year.

Having modified its inflation-targeting system to allow more leeway in evaluating and managing consumer price stability, this mid-cycle inflation target range implies an allowable range of 5.5 percent against the 4-5 percent target for 2007.

This is in line with the decision of the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee to adopt an inflation target with a medium-term target of plus or minus one percentage point.

The point targeting system means that instead of setting a range as a target, the government will announce an exact level and the treasury would be equivalent to one percentage point up and below this level. This means a wider band is allowed. Doris C. Bumbac

Asian stocks rise; crude oil steadies above $60

Nikkei ends with 4th year of growth; Australia hits record

SINGAPORE—ASIAN shares rose 0.2 percent to end at a record high for the third day in a row.

"The market has, as a whole, just run with the wright of money and the persons equity theme, and those two factors should continue into the early part of next year," said Robert Shook, a portfolio manager with E.C. Shaneh & Co.

Financial bookmakers are expecting London's FTSE 100 and the CAC 40 in Paris to open almost three points higher, with Germany's DAX between two points lower and six points higher.

US stocks finished marginally lower on Thursday as investors sold off recent outperforming stocks to lock in profits.

The Dow Jones industrial average declined 0.07 percent to end at 12,501.51 and the tech-laden Nasdaq Composite Index ended 0.23 percent lower at 2,415.37. Oil had climbed 35 cents on Wednesday after weekly oil data showed an 8.1 million barrel drop in US commercial crude stocks last week, mostly due to delayed deliveries to refiners as the Texas and Louisiana coasts were foggy weather.

The Texas' month contract now stands about 1 percent lower than it did at the start of the year, its first annual decline since dropping from $26.80 to below $20 a barrel during 2005.

Prices soared by 34 percent in 2006 and 41 percent last year.

Gold edged down to $629 an ounce on light profit-taking ahead of the year-end holidays, but it held near three-week highs as lingering worries over Iran's nuclear ambitions led to fresh buying by investors and banks.

The US currency steadied after a series of economic reports on consumer confidence, midwest business activity and existing home sales showed the world's largest economy may be in better shape than thought.

"It is rather puzzling that market participants are not buying the dollar on news despite the strong data," said a trader at a big Japanese bank.

The euro edged up to 156.34 yen, near a record high of 156.70 yen hit on Thursday.

Japanese government bonds eased for the third straight session, weighed down by weak Treasuries and by the view that the Bank of Japan may raise interest rates next month.

Taiwan's main TAIEX closed its index 1.17 percent higher, ignoring an interest rate rise by the central bank for the previous day. Singapore's Straits Times Index was up 1.13 percent by 0620 GMT.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index eased 0.2 percent in afternoon trade, still investors lacking a predictable, a protracted rally to mainland Chinese stocks.

Reuters

IMF cautions investors on growth risks

WASHINGTON—GLOBAL ECONOMIC growth is on a solid track but still faces risks, the IMF said on Wednesday, cautioning that the apparent complacency of many investors could trigger a market upset if something caused them to take fright.

"Market sentiment has continued to extol a revised scenario for a benign slowdown, which keeps inflationary pressures contained," the International Monetary Fund said in an update to its bi-annual Global Financial Stability Report.

"But downside risks remain and there have been changes in underlying financial conditions that warrant continued vigilance," the IMF said.

It noted debt leverage levels have grown at private equity funds, while hedge funds that sold financial options may be exposed to sudden market swings.

By and large, though, the outlook was encouraging. "US growth has showed as the housing market has cooled.

But there appears to have been little spillover from this to the rest of the economy, while activity abroad has gathered pace.

On the other hand, a sharp fall in volatility levels in financial markets, as well as a misestimation of risk as investors adopt similar trading strategies, could be storing up trouble for the future.

"Investors appear to be giving insufficient weight to downside risks and might assume that the low risk premia are a permanent feature of the financial market landscape," it said.

In particular, IMF economists noted that cyclical factors might be adding to the low levels of volatility, which could reverse with potentially disruptive consequences.

"A volatility shock—perhaps caused by a downward shift in growth expectations or by renewed inflationary pressures—could precipitate portfolio adjustments and raise underlying volatility," the IMF said.

Reuters

Emerging markets set for healthy returns in 2007

LONDON—A SLOWING GLOBAL economy will erode but not eliminate bumper emerging market returns next year, with the uncertain US economic outlook likely to cause some ups and downs to test appetite.

Given rising US, euro zone and Japanese interest rates, 2006 was a stellar year.

JP Morgan's sovereign bond index (EMBI+ shows spreads over US Treasuries at record narrow levels, with returns second to private to dollar bonds.

On equities, Morgan Stanley's emerging index is now near a record high.

"Our view is that emerging markets will have another good year in 2007 but there are enough countervailing risks out there to make it volatile from time to time," said Sarah Hewitt, senior economist at the American Express Bank in London.

Hewitt said a soft US landing, the continued Japanese and euro-zone upturn and steady growth in most emerging markets would keep the global backdrop benign, but she warned: "People are unsure which way the Fed will move and that means we will see some choppiness going forward."

Andrew Fisher, Citigroup head of emerging equities, expects EMEA stocks to return 25 percent next year versus 35 percent in 2006 and 55-56 percent returns in Latin America thanks to decent global growth, ample liquidity and still reasonable valuations.

"We are thus willing to call for an unprecedented fifth year of gains in emerging markets," he said.

Analysts also predict a continued boom in local currency debt which can see higher risk/low-dollar double digit yields.

Over 60 percent of trade is now in the local segment.

Potential risk factors next year could be anything from a US recession - still seen as unlikely—to higher Japanese interest rates that would trigger the unwinding of carry trades.

A significant economic slowdown could hit commodities, key for many developing states.

"I think the single biggest risk is the unwinding of leverage and there is a fair amount of that in the system," said Rashish Rozhia, strategist at Lehman Brothers in London.

Interim rates of just 0.01 percent makes you the currency of choice to fund overseas high-yield investments but a hawkish Bank of Japan next January through the carry trade this year.

"Clearly, G7 markets pose the risk and it's probably going to be a faster one is not forecast on," Rozhia said.

Most argue that the limited extent of the US slowdown will keep the impact light while the Fed rate cuts expected from the middle of 2007 should unleash liquidity and support markets.

A more bearish view is of a global downturn, with Asian and the euro zone growth insufficient to counteract US weakness.

Reuters

CHICAGO/Wheat fan second baseman Rafaelo Caputo (right) rings the bell to mark the closing of stock trading for 2006 at the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo. Japanese stocks edged upward Friday in wrap up a turbulent 2006. The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock index closed at 17,225.83 points on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Friday morning, up 1.81 points, or 0.01 percent, from Thursday. Financial Services Minister Yoji Yamamoto is at center. AP

St. Peter Life Plan Certificate as Dealer of Pre-Need Life Plans renewed for 2007

The Securities and Exchange Commission, after considering the requirements of all pertinent laws, has renewed the Certificate of Registration of St. Peter Life Plan, Inc. as a Dealer in Pre-need Life Plans in the Philippines valid from January 1, 2007 until December 31, 2007 per SEC Memorandum Order No. 372 Series of 2006.

St. Peter Life Plan, Inc. consistently aspires to be the choice of every Filipino in the delivery of needed financial services and is an active and progressive partner in nation-building.

In compliance with the SEC Pre-Need Circular on advertisements regarding the selling of Pre-need plans, the Securities and Exchange Commission has also determined the accurate or complete use of fonts, advertisements, text segments, colors, design, sizes, relative emphasis in the contents of the Securities and Regulation Code, and is strongly prohibited. The public is encouraged to report violations pursuant to the Securities and Exchange Commission rule on strategic complaints or laws or transgressions enacted.

We further invite those who have concerns or comments on the above pronouncements to call 725-8702.

JOB

5 years of the euro: Expensive coffee or economic boon?

PARIS—FIVE YEARS AFTER THE introduction of euro bills and coins, many Europeans appear more concerned about the perceived increase in the cost of their coffee than the supposed economic benefits for the continent.

Public support for the single currency has fallen since its launch in cash form on Jan. 1, 2002, when 304 million Europeans swapped their national currencies for a common means of exchange.

Seen as an important step toward deeper European integration, the real initiative was sold to citizens on the promise it would help bring long-term growth and protection from the currency crises that had regularly hit the continent.

Five years on however, many blame the euro for raising the cost of living, particularly prices for coffee and beer, an eating (fast-food) and service providers of using confusion created by the currency as an opportunity to hike their prices.

In Germany, controversy stems the "Teuro," a play on the German word for expensive—euro...continues.

The European Central Bank has done its utmost to rebut claims of higher prices and the Frankfurt-based institution points to the stable level of inflation since the euro replaced its slightly more than 300 percent over the period.

The bank has been at pains to stress that increases in the costs of energy and real estate are not connected to the euro and that prices for some goods have actually fallen, in the high technology sector for example.

However the Europeans Central Bank has recently become a target for criticism itself, particularly from French politicians, amid a debate about the strength of the euro against the dollar and the yen.

The inflation rates, or rates nationally, left issued by the euro might also be attributed to the difficulty of explaining the wider economic benefits of the currency.

Its introduction was seen as a way to reduce damaging exchange rate fluctuations in Europe, providing greater stability for companies and investors.

It also helped underpin the Europe single market, aimed at raising competition between national companies, and boosting economic growth.

Furthermore, the euro has led to lower long-term interest rates because confidence in the system and the reliability of the European Central Bank have enabled governments to issue bonds at lower rates of interest.

Lower long-term interest rates lead to lower short-term interest rates, which in turn means a lower cost of credit for consumers. Lower long-term rates also mean that European governments are paying less to borrow money.

But for the political front, the euro was once seen as being a catalyst for deeper integration, but the process of bringing member states into a closer political union has foundered in recent times.

Although the European Union has recently since its introduction, and coming 10 new members in 2004, the rejection of the European Constitution by French and Dutch voters in 2005 was a setback for the EU project.

There are also signs that the allure of the euro has fallen for candidate countries.

Slovenia is set to become the 13th member of the eurozone on Jan. 1, but other new EU members are now showing less enthusiasm than before for jettisoning their national currencies.

Economic progress has also been slow, with many governments backing away from ambitious reforms of their economies and growth of great distress to produce less than the lower than the United States in recent years.

The Lisbon Agenda, launched in 2000 to turn the European economy into the most competitive in the world, has withered and has since been watered down.

In any case, though the euro and notes have long since disappeared, there are signs that national currencies live on in the minds of consumers. AFP

In the Light of Truth

The Grail Message by Abdu-l-Baha

"In the Light of Truth", the Grail Message, is a classic work that offers clear and perceptive answers to questions which challenge every human being. Written by a Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith (early 1921 - 1938), it is a collection of 108 essays addressing all spheres of life ranging from God and the Universe to the Laws of Creation. It answers eternal questions such as:

What does it mean to be human ?

What is the purpose of life on Earth ?

What happens to "me" when I die ?

In this context, the author writes: "I wish to fill the gaps which so far have remain unanswered in the minds of men as burning questions, and which never leave any serious thinker in peace."

To perceive the values within the simplicity and unswerving logic of the Grail Message, no specific type of education is required. Age, sex, race and religious background present no barriers, unless they are self-imposed. However, reading the Grail Message requires an open mind and a seeking spirit.

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar O. Mangosong

Cervical cancer vaccine to save patients P500,000

By Tessa R. Salazar

HUMANITY'S AGE-OLD war against cancer entered a new battlefront as another vaccine was developed to stop another prevalent form of cancer in its tracks, joining liver cancer vaccine in over-the-counter vaccine. That also means that in 2007, the lives of up to 13,000 Filipino women will have spared from the ravages of cervical cancer.

The Statens of Basel and Diego gave the go signal for the vaccine on Oct. 18. Cervarix is being marketed in Gardasil (containing quadrivalent human papillomavirus), the vaccine's offering however, is limited in hope and gain ages 9 to 26.

In Office 1 Inquirer, president of the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists of the Philippines Inc., and another type of Gardasil for 26- to 45-year-old women is already in Phase 3 trials and has been given a BFAD approval of the MSD (Merck, Sharp and Dohme) product in 2006 in 2006.

Gardasil is the first and only FDA-approved HPV vaccine in the Philippines and in other 43 countries to date. The other vaccine, Cervarix cervical cancer vaccine is Cervarix (Bivalent HPV vaccine).

The vaccine is expected to prevent 70 percent of cervical cancers caused by the HPV virus subtypes 16 and 18. It is expected to prevent 90 percent of anogenital warts in men and women caused by HPV subtypes 6 and 11. It is also expected to prevent 70 percent of the cancers in the vulva, vagina and anogenital areas of women. It would also prevent men from transmitting the virus to women.

Price obstacles

Set ready for the downside, though. The estimated cost of the vaccine is P15,000 and P12,000. Domingo admitted that the price range would, indeed, be prohibitive for the middle-income group.

He said, however, that comparing this to the total cost of cervical cancer treatment in hospitals would be worth the expense. He added that the hospital treatment of cervical cancer would reach as much as P500,000 per patient.

According to Domingo, a complete vaccination requires three shots of Gardasil on month zero, month two and month six.

He explained that each injection of 0.5 ml is prefilled, and is given in the deltoid or buttocks each muscle (any between 9 to 26 and 45 and 65, depending on the doctor administering the shots.

Domingo added that this would be cheaper compared to the annual shots administered in the United States, where a dozen could charge $360 per shot.

Who qualifies?

Domingo, who is also a professor of the UP College of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, said any healthy 9- to 26-year-old boy or girl is qualified to have a vaccine.

Any woman who is pregnant and any person infected with HIV-AIDS or any person immune-compromised illnesses are not allowed to be vaccinated with Gardasil. The vaccination may be postponed to the time after birth or after recovery from a major illness.

Patients should also consult their attending physicians or pediatricians before undergoing vaccination and learn about the vaccine.

When asked if Gardasil would be a one-time vaccination guaranteeing a lifetime of immunity, Domingo stressed that at the moment the need for a booster dose has not been determined since the vaccine is new.

"Initial patients who received this vaccine under 2005's research were followed up for five years, and the [protocol's] mean titers of antibodies found to have remained very high," Domingo said.

"The knowledge about the need for a booster [shots] will be known in One time after the [research, called 'seminal cohort'] is

SOURCE: BLAKISTON'S GYNECOLOGY, 13TH EDITION

To the good times ahead

DISCOVER

Maxine Santos Rallos

LAST MARCH, COLUMN INTRODUCED A study by psychologists from the University of California at Los Angeles about the effect of positive feedback on them in a relationship.

In the study, Shelley Gable and her colleagues hypothesized that relationships based longer when both parties involved felt that their significant others responded positively to their own personal triumphs.

Gable et al. noted that when people are happy or excited about something, their partners naturally share their joy. This, at least, was assumed, but yet the researchers found this wasn't always the case when they examined their data from the study outlined in the previous column.

The researchers asked couples to take turns sharing positive and negative events during their usual conversations. Gable et al. found that those who received from the negative events related since their hypothesis focused on how the positive events were received when shared. This made it a bit difficult to prove their first hypothesis that when they share positive events, their partners will react equally, the significance of which would not be nothing to the positive or negative content of the story. If the story had been considered negative by the listeners, the data were not reviewed.

Based on gender

With regard to the second hypothesis—that the perceived response of participant's partner to the story shared helped predict the relationship's long-term prospects—Gable et al. found that the gender differences found no gender.

When men shared a positive event, they felt that they received equally positive feedback from their partners so long as it was what the researchers termed "active and constructive" in response to a positive response. When the women shared a positive event however, they categorized their partners' responses based on how personally important they felt the event was to them. For example, if the woman had been given a long-awaited promotion, she expected her partner to be extremely enthusiastic and animated. If the response was less "active and constructive" than they'd expected, the women felt their partners were not supportive.

If the woman had related a positive event that she'd personally rated less significant, such as receiving a compliment from a friend, she appraised a positive but more muted response.

In short, as Gable et al. wrote, men report their partners to respond actively and constructively to supporting of their positive events, whereas only report [that] when they themselves view the event as important."

Lower scores given

The researchers found that, 4 of the nearly 80 couples who participated in the study had broken up by the time they sent me follow-up questionnaires. Upon reviewing the data collected on them 4 couples, they found that those participants had given lower scores to their partners' responsiveness to positive events shared than the other participants had. These data and the conclusion reached by Gable et al. shouldn't be considered final; however, to be, the study itself shouldn't be considered definitive, and recommendations therefore argue against that notion.

For example, the study's results might have been affected if the participants hadn't only been dating but had also included married couples since the stakes there are higher, I'd argue. It is likely that the closer of participants was shared by the researchers' affiliations with collecting surveys; this may change however as it appears the collecting surveys [may] be [trying to] appear to motivate couples by acting as a relationship counselor service as well.

As the data year approaches, though, the results do suggest a resolution to be made and kept—when good news is shared, it is best to respond as enthusiastically in the excitement and the joy conveyed. To express anything less would suggest a lack of interest, which can only hurt the person sharing the news. Regardless of the topic of relationship resolved, it never hurt to show the joy.

E-mail the author at msantos@manila.com.

Bites that kill

EUREKA!

Quennie N. Lee-Chua

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, DENGUE cases have gone down, but the suffering and loss the disease causes will never be erased. Let us look back at the human toll dengue inflicted this year, Asst Commissioner of the DOST Science and Technology Media Service writes.

Eleven years old Shaniliyn Canuman of Sitio Sapang Kawayan, Tarlac, died after her longest battle with dengue hemorrhagic fever. Shaniliyn and schoolmates were on their way home from an excursion to Subic when she suddenly felt dizzy. She was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to the disease after 11 days.

In another town of the same province, chubby 5-year-old Mona Mayadon is also sorely missed. Her grief-stricken grandmother can't believe what has happened. Last Aug. 11, Shaniliyn and Mona succumbed to high fever. Mosquito nets, fumigation and other good intent still arrived too late.

On Sept. 7, the same tragedy claimed three other children—one from Tarlac, Rizal, and two from Quezon. At the end, warm blood soured from their cramped bodies' veins, noses and ears. They died too early, victims of deadly viruses causing dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF).

The Department of Health's Bureau of Epidemiology counts and dissects dengue cases. In the first nine months, nearly 13,300 cases registered from January to August this year. The National Capital Region registered the most number of cases, followed by Central Luzon and Calabarzon. By September, an epidemic was declared in Rizal because of huge rise in the number of cases and fatalities in the area.

According to the World Health Organization, the Philippines topped the list of six countries in the region with the most number of dengue cases from January to October this year (33,527 cases with 290 deaths). Thailand had 5,200 cases with 12 deaths; Indonesia had 86,000 cases with 800 deaths; Malaysia had 35,281 but no number of deaths reported; Singapore had 14,249 cases with 12 deaths; Australia had two reported cases.

Deciphering the deadly virus

Dengue is not new. Benjamin Rush coined the term "breakbone fever" during its first reported case in 1789 due to the victims' torturous muscle aches and joint pains. Dengue comes from the phrase ki denga pepo, which means cramping seizure caused by evil spirit. The term was an attempt to describe victims of the virus still unknown disease during outbreaks in Swahili, East Africa, and in the Caribbean in 1800s. DHF epidemics were first experienced in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. By 1970, DHF had become a primary cause of death among children in the region.

Dengue fever or its potentially fatal form, dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF), affects tropical and subtropical regions where warm temperatures and high relative humidity favor the breeding and proliferation of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes. These mosquitoes are small, usually with white bands around their body.

To make matters worse, DHF is caused by four different but related serologically related viruses. It is transmitted by day-biting female mosquitoes that have become infected persons. These persons may or may not show any sign of illness but are unknowingly early sources of infection.

Deadly transmission

The mosquitoes breed in water

holding containers such as unused or junk tires, drums, jars, bottles, vases, flower pots and flower vases. Outdoor urban areas are generally the favorite habitat of these virus-carriers, although they can also be found in sturdy residential dwellings, schools and other public places.

Moreover, crowding nonetheless or transmission since mosquitoes prefer to stay in domestic and nonsanitized habitats. The mosquito usually survives up to 30 days, but in favorable conditions, it can stay alive for up to three weeks, spreading its deadly disease.

What to do

Once the virus enters the body, the body tries to stop the bleeding, hence the depletion of blood platelets in one of the disease manifestations of DHF. The victim suffers from a sudden high fever, with severe headache, joint and muscle pains, and rashes (on red spots) lasting for some days. There is no treatment, but care can be given to alleviate symptoms. Oral rehydration therapy (by mouth) is required. Paracetamol can be given to reduce fever, but not aspirin or anti-inflammatory, since these can increase risk of bleeding.

Sadly, agencies note only when DHF cases reach alarming numbers. Many seek financial assistance from the National Dengue Control Program. Lacking preventive measures are steps, such as preventive fogging. Public health experts believe that misuse of the dengue control program depends on a holistic strategy.

In the Philippines, we have laws to safeguard health, such as the Code on Sanitation (1975), the food, drugs and Cosmetic Act (1963), the Clean Air Act (1999), the Biological Solid Waste Management Act (2000) and the Clean Water Act (2004). There are also administrative orders regarding dengue control activities and memoranda of agreement with various national agencies regarding the prevention and control of dengue outbreaks. But the real challenge for all of us is implementation.

* * *

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Never too late the Hero

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

TODAY, DEC. 30, AS WE CELEbrate Rizal Day, another type of festivities will hopefully improve the history of the healthcare system in the Philippines. The Presidency is expected to sign today an executive order which is supposed to improve activities, orientation and allocation of resources regarding healthcare delivery in our country. This issued EO is called "Rural Health Education Reform Order."

The primary goal of the proposed EO is to improve the healthcare and education system of the Filipino people through the formal partnership of government, academe, professionals, physicians, the business sector and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This broad coalition will hopefully generate greater support for government programs that would target the poorest of the leading causes of sickness and deaths in the country. The ultimate goal is to create a healthier Philippines.

The EO also aims to create and build a culture of commitment, involving not only healthcare professionals but others as well to help heal the various "ills" and tribulations of the nation. With a deep sense of commitment, the "Rural" would hopefully share their blessings with the "have-nots" by way of social responsibility programs, specifically in the areas of health and education.

Health plan proposed

The proponent of this nationwide health plan is the Philippine College of Physicians (PCP). Through its communication arm, the recent headed by Dr. Tony Leachon. The PCP is the national organization of all internist-specialists in the country and consists of more than 6,000 members, many of whom run the country's top hospitals and medical institutions.

MEDICAL FILES

The current president is Dr. Rose Zamora, a pulmonary specialist based in Cebu City. The plan was highly endorsed by many medical societies, Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education. Sen. Jinggoy Estrada is one of the staunch supporters of the plan.

The PCP believes that there is a link between deficiencies in healthcare conditions and quality of education. Therefore, by improving the quality of education, healthcare condition should gradually improve with time. "Primary education and translation of values can make wonders for our nation's health and healthcare system in the long term," Sen. Jinggoy and Leachon explain.

Treasuring one's health

This makes sense since most misinformation on the prevention of illness and death can foster a strong sense of treasuring one's health, and never allowing it to be compromised by a lifestyle characterized by smoking, drinking, unprotected sex and other forms of indulgence. One's health is also frequently put in jeopardy in one's pursuit of material wealth where one starts to work.

The Hero will mandate the Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) and other educators to incorporate relevant health education modules which will emphasize the prevention of leading causes of illness and death such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases), diabetes and other communicable diseases in the school curriculum up to the tertiary level, from that of primary, secondary college and postgraduate levels.

It proposes also to include relevant topics like moral values, integrity, patriotism, leadership, consumerism, code of ethics and passion for excellence. The emphasis on morals and values aims to arouse and build a new culture of commitment which will lead to upliftment economy and enhance the image of Filipinos here and abroad.

Plan of action

The plan of action is to identify, harness and consolidate all advocacy and public health campaign programs in cooperation with the government and the different independent agencies of the PCP and other medical organizations affiliated with the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), that would address the top 10 leading causes of morbidity and mortality, currently affecting the country.

A big challenge for this proposal is to be effectively executed is to influence the government and legislators to increase the budget allocation for health and bring it, maybe not at par, but at least a little closer to what the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends. At present, our health allocation is not even a third of the WHO recommendation.

We wish this Hero had come earlier than late as many like it on our country's health, it's never too late the hero.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar G. Pangyarihan

Helping cut the backlog a few houses at a time

By Charles E. Bahan

SWEDEN-BASED FIRM Atlas Copco is not only known for manufacturing compressors, construction and mining tools and equipment, power tools and assembly systems. It recently embarked on home building, albeit, sponsoring several housing units under the Habitat for Humanity movement.

"Providing decent housing to people who are unable to afford their own home should always be on the top list of any company's corporate responsibility programs. The Habitat for Humanity project is an opportunity to volunteer," said Atlas Copco Philippines Inc. GM Jonnie Regis.

He said housing is a common challenge in the Philippines is home to at least 90 million people.

With the population growing at an annual rate of 2.32 percent, data from the National Statistical Coordination Board revealed that the country would need 3.75 million units by 2010 (and yet, the country now has a housing backlog of at least a million).

Encourage private sector

With the scenario, the government is currently working on how to provide more shelter assistance and pursue strategies to encourage more private sector participation in housing production.

"But is where we come in and work with organizations like Habitat for Humanity. There exists a unique channel where our contributions are reaching those who need it," Regis said.

The Habitat for Humanity movement was founded in 1976 in the United States. The program, which was developed from the concept of "partnership housing," helps bring those indigent families who lack with volunteers from the donee individual or company to build simple, decent houses.

Mudslide victims

In this case, Atlas Copco has chosen to support the Habitat for Humanity in Barangay Guinsaugon, in Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte where the beneficiary families are victims of the recent mudslide.

The company collaborated with the local contractors and Ebenezer Industries to the Philippines Inc. and constructed three housing units.

Regis said the Atlas Copco Employees Club (Acec) voluntarily donated the fund, which was supposedly the group's budget for the summer outing.

"Their sacrifice is well worth it considering they would be helping families unduly very hard-hit," explained Regis.

Supported GK

This is not the first time the company has supported a housing project in Atlas Copco also built two housing units for a Gawad Kalinga project in Davao City that helped several relocated families living in the riverbanks last September.

Regis informed that the company's housing building project is a part part of its future plans of helping the community where they are getting business.

"Atlas Copco is also looking at adopting a school or another community in the future," he said.

Habitat for Humanity now spans over 100 countries and is responsible for placing over 200,000 families into new homes around the world while the Gawad Kalinga is a movement that envision building 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in seven years through its GK777 campaign. The campaign was formally launched on Oct. 4, 2003 and looks forward to deliver its promises by Oct. 4, 2010.

ATLAS Copco (Philippines) Inc. GM Regis (left with pairs visitor) leads the painting of the donated houses.

Building lifestyle communities

THE FIRST phase of the Ayala Westgrove Heights in Silang, Cavite

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzmán Jr.

BETTER DAYS, PEOPLE LIVING IN A barangay meet and socialized at the corner barbershop or sari-sari (variety) store. Not big crowds like Bonifacio Global City or Ortigas commercial centers, but grouped at the church plaza or blocked off their main street to party from today, this current hotel was in the small provincial towns and barrios. When the number is counted in the millions, it is considered quaint and charming.

More recently, in many areas, barangay halls or covered courts have been the site of gatherings for basketball league games, fiestas, wedding or birthday celebrations, local political rallies and other such activities. Today, even in the smaller subdivisions, one of the basic amenities and initial come-ons is the village clubhouse, an amenity how have or purely it may be. It seems that people just need a place to relax away for

from home, a place to pass the time with co-residents, a place to celebrate as a community.

Apparently, the more relaxed residents feel about the communal area (enough for them to be able to be in their most casual clothes and slippers), the more involved neighbors are in community life. People make connections and delight in "being close to home, yet able to interact with neighbors, but with the assurance that they can still go back to their privacy whenever they want it. A community whose interest in this natural requisite and development have been slow to respond to this palpable need.

Community gathering sites

Through the years, community gathering sites have been improved and reengineered, designed and renovated to suit the needs of many and subgroups. Subdivision development has reached new heights in the last few years compared to the epitome of subdivision style of the '90s. Back then, developers built spacious residences in the posh villages of Greenhills, Valle Verde, or Dasmariñas, with a nearby sports club to fill one's days. Nowadays, aside from the minimal requirements imposed by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) regarding open spaces, developers are going the extra mile in offering increasingly attractive features.

For instance, in the Ayala Westgrove Heights in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, several recreation and social aspects are being built in different areas of the development. These include the main clubhouse and swimming pool, a kids' activity center called Gingerbee with a kid-friendly pool, a sports center with several tennis and basketball courts, and other social function clubs located in various sites throughout the subdivision. Residents do not have to cross into only one space during their leisure time. They have a choice of several areas to socialize in. Depending on their preferences at the moment. These structures, though differing in purpose, are similar in style and finishes to uphold a sense of identity for the whole development.

Better and better options

In the coming years, we can only expect more real estate developers to offer better and better options for subdivision living. Common spaces, such as parks, chapels and clubs, will have to be more suited to the homeowners' wants and needs. As communities further from city hubs, commercial areas would be provided in new residential townships.

In subdivisions targeted for young families, nursery and elementary schools must be considered. Or, while convenient, special-ty clinics would be ideal. But in every development, planners must consider not just the individual family that moves in, but also the community of families that will arise. If the choice is toward a cozy and friendly community, there must be interaction to support this. Families can-not just go or know each other in the streets; the environment must encourage the camaraderie. There ought to be places to connect with neighbors, preserve, inviting settings where social bridges can be built, collective walls torn down. Then, friendships begin and community prospers.

The best studio unit at Manhattan Garden City

WHEN YOU'RE SINGLE AND SUCCESSful, you'd want a home that puts you in the center of it all, a short ride takes you to the country's business districts for your appointments. An elevator ride away and you're ready for a memorable night with your friends at the country's fine lifestyle and leisure centers. To top it all off, you proudly show them your new home, undoubtedly the best studio unit in the whole modern because of its very functional layout.

Make this scenario your very own, once you get a studio unit at Manhattan Garden City. The hip studio model unit's

THE PROGRAM is typical home makes it highly appealing to yuppies and starting families.

THE MANHATTAN Garden City studio unit with balcony offers the best studio layout in the whole metro.

modern Tropical motif has earned rave and "wows" from many investors. Its functional layout means that spaces are perfectly segregated and with clear panels, you can even turn it into a compact one-bedroom unit.

Tropical theme

Upon entering, the tropical theme will make you feel relaxed. Stools made of woven nacho material and a dividing door made of bamboo are the highlights of the living room. Integrating back good old memories of your last beach resort trip. Neutral colors and dark-ends propose a healthy interplay, making the room lively in character.

The bedroom is also a resort haven, as dark wood, red, gold and beige combine to bring about a feeling of Hungry. Lo. This is the perfect spot to relax, with a plasma TV for supreme entertainment and a desk for writing notes in your journals. Just outside your bedroom, a spacious balcony hosts a meditation garden to our frustrate and a nice lounger, perfect for some yoga or morning exercise. It's also good for entertaining your friends late into the night.

Strategic location

Every day, an adventure awaits you at Manhattan Garden City. It is strategically located within the 46-storey Centris area! it is the first-and-only master-planned development that boasts of Davao's access to both the LRT2 and MRT3. Thus, you'll always be on time for your important business meetings in Ortigas and Makati. Definitely, it's the only property that offers a SECURITY convenient to travel to and around the metro.

At night, the biggest entertainment area in the whole of Metro Manila awaits you when you go home. Since Manhattan Garden City is strategically located within Araneta Center, you are at the center of all the activities. Watch concerts and basketball games at the Araneta Coliseum, do some shopping at the stylish Gateway Mall, or go to the supermarket to prepare for a get-together.

Newest offering

Is there anything else that will make the best studio unit even better? Yes! With Homelifes, the newest offering from leading developer Megaworld Corp. and Security Bank, you can own a studio unit in Manhattan Garden City for as low as P38,647 per month. Definitely, it's the best real estate deal you can ever get these days!

It's best that you check the metro's best studio unit now. So, visit the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the third level of Gateway Mall. Or call 810-2222 or email inquiries@manhattangardencity.com immediately for a viewing appointment.

BUSINESS

STREET vendor Daisy Pino hawks pillows for P15 a piece. Pino walks some 25 kilometers a day, working 12 hours a day to make some P600 to P900. The economy has shown some positive growth this year, with GDP rising by 5.5 percent in the second quarter. AP

S&P says debt ratios key to credit-rating upgrade

Notes positive developments in RP economy

A STRING OF POSITIVE ECO nomic figures from the Philippines bodes well for its sovereign rating, but any upgrade will require consistent performance and an improvement in key debt ratios, Standard & Poor's said yesterday.

S&P, since Philippine sovereigns at BB-minus with a stable outlook, which is below investment grade, S&P will review the rating in the first quarter of 2007.

Many analysts have said positive economic data from the Philippines this year, including controlling the budget deficit, increased government revenues, sharply higher remittances from overseas and a strong peso currency—augur well for a ratings upgrade.

On Thursday, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas announced it was paying the last of its obligations to the International Monetary Fund ahead of schedule, thereby ending four and a half decades of drawing on IMF resources.

"So far as the prepayment of the IMF debt is concerned, I think that in itself won't have much of an impact on the ratings because that is a drop in the ocean compared to the $35 billion of total sinking external public debt," S&P credit analyst Agnes Bernard said in a telephone interview.

But he added: "It conveys the message to external financiers are on the right track and there is a diminishing dependence on external funds. And this is just the latest in a string of positive developments which we have seen throughout this year."

But a ratings upgrade will have to be preceded by a change in the outlook to positive from stable, Bernard said. And there were other factors to be considered.

"The big question with respect to all these positive developments is to what extent are they one off and to what extent do they signal a permanently improved environment—here's a political and a policy environment," he said.

Also, the Philippines' debt ratios are quite poor, its foreign debt-to-GDP ratio fell at the end of the third quarter, but was still high at 44.6 percent.

Debt servicing was at 11.2 percent of total exports of goods and services in the first nine months of the year.

"When you look at those figures, debt to GDP, general government interest to revenues, debt to revenues, the Philippines is still on earlier in the BB-minus rating category," Bernard said.

"These ratios are still a lot worse than the median for similarly rated countries."

And while government revenues have risen, much of the increase resulted from a new expanded value-added tax, which was raised to 12 percent from 10 percent in February.

Even next February, the annual comparison won't benefit from the increase in the rate.

Despite the caution, financial markets have reacted the improvement in the Philippines' economic performance. Reuters

BIR extends program for delinquent taxpayers to Jan. 31

By Michelle V Rama

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue has further extended its Abatement Program for tax delinquents to Jan. 31 next year, saying there was still a significant number of taxpayers who wanted to apply but could not meet the earlier deadlines.

The original deadline for the Abatement Program was Dec. 31, but was extended to Dec. 22 to accommodate more applicants. The BIR said another extension was needed to grant several requests for an extension.

The Abatement Program, under Revenue Regulations No. 15-2006, is the BIR's compromise offer for delinquent taxpayers and one of the measures intended to help ease its tax collection shortfall.

Under the program, the BIR may drop pending civil cases against tax delinquents and waive all penalties if they would voluntarily pay the principal amount of their tax obligations.

However, those whose cases are criminal in nature, those that are pending before the Presidential Commission on Good Government, and those filed under the Run After Tax Evaders Program are not eligible to apply for the Abatement Program.

The Abatement Program was expected to have somehow helped the BIR cover its tax collection shortfall or far more as of November. The Department of Finance, head agency of the BIR, however, said that actual amount of additional funds collected under the Abatement program has yet to be finalized.

In January to November, the BIR collected P599.1 billion, falling short of the target for the 11-month period by about P27 billion. For the whole of 2006, the BIR is expected to likewise fall short of the official tax collection target of P675.4 billion.

The BIR has centered the P675.4-billion target and insisted that its true target should be P692.9 billion.

Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buling said its target should be reckoned by taking away expected tax collection from the issuance of government securities, given the intent of the national government to trim down the volume of treasury bills and bonds it issued.

Buling said the BIR should not be held accountable for shortfalls in the collections of taxes that it has no control over.

Super

Oh, seven

Photography: CHARLES LU of PhilMuseum
Styling editor: DAVID MILAN
Styling: STACY RODRIGUEZ
Makeup: XERO ZUZUARTE of Skin Deep
Hair: MANTE ALINGASA using Kiehl's Taylor Series
Cover Face: HELENA BELMONTE

Our annual list of Super's 27 peeps to watch out for in 2007 page 01

Shudders!
Pepe Diokno does the Metro Manila filmfest marathon
page C6

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dorio

Firework Wizards

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT the gang-ho spirit of the Asian Games was going to dwindle our before the holidays, we discovered yet another reason to cheer on the Filipino ... uh ... pyromaniacidan.

From Jan. 5 to 13, the country once again plays host to the 2nd World Pyro Olympics. Veteran fireworks wizards from 10 participating countries—Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Philippines, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom and the USA—plus a rookie in a broken-limb 6-day championship.

In between the pyro displays, a talented panel of Pinoy musicians, acrobats, clowns, fire-breathers and more are on to rock the night for the spectators.

All the action takes place at The Esplanade, which is directly behind SM Mall of Asia. Tickets are priced at P100, P500, and P1,250, and are available at all BCBC and SCBC Savings branches. Visit www.WorldPyroOlympics.com or call 817 3873 to 75.

Other Super! 24/7 events:

Dec. 30, Saturday

Lounge It Pierre w/ Soundgood Edsel Encinas, Cosmic House Nation at Opposite, Rouge Lounge in Cebu at 18 Cafe, Ibiza Jose Antonio & Tata Bote at Temple, Dimitrius w/ DJ Martin Purger at Embassy, Club Wham Bam w/ Ghost at Government Club, Substance & Jessica at Prince of Jaipur

Dec. 31, Sunday

Countdown to 2007 at the Embassy-Super Club, New Year Party at Republic

Jan. 1, Monday

Happy Mondays! w/ Bingy Manotoc at Embassy, Cosmic Cowboy Don't Like Mondays! w/ Ed ROM, Restless Rhino, Chemical Indie ground w/ Kidnare at Ukiyoto, Acoustic Nights at Aurora, Under Cover Fridays at Weight at Club Model, Cartoonist at Aranda Entrance

Jan. 2, Tuesday

Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Blanchet Dario at Embassy, Cosmic Spectacular Con Fresh Grants & Fresh at Moonlit, Linus Sison & the Quezon Band at Café Havana Greenhill, Piano Nights at Aurora, Linden Suites

Jan. 3, Wednesday

Eat-Mart Miranda & Johnsonne at Embassy, Club Charlie & Fine at Temple, Wine Bottle at Mercy, Stress Therapy at Embassy, MP Room With Wanko's Music Factory at Cawayan Makati

Jan. 4, Thursday

DJ Boyet Gonzaga at Summa Classe, Whatever Thursdays at Moonlit, DPS at Magnet Cafe, Florida Twist-days at Bed

Jan. 5, Friday

Flammable Fridays w/ DJ Alex Tomas at Minus, DJ Sisters Sun at Embassy Club, Soul Divine w/ DJ Mike Garcia at Embassy Cubana, Jeanne Lim Band at 18 Cavite, Bingo Nights, Edu Manzarena & Jessica at Privee at Jaipur

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more info, text 28/7 QUIZ to 2861 (Globe/Islacom/2864 (Smart) (.25 per text msg/24-7 runs or post up your free copy of 24/7 Directory/Map/Gallery at fans.net/celebs.net/24-7.ph. Submit your events/items/news Sunday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24_7@yahoo.com

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A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Pavilion shopper's frenzy at the Manila Pavilion Hotel

SHOPPING CENTERS ARE CRAMMED WITH frantic Yuletide shoppers. But why get lost in the search for that perfect present, when you can purchase them through the Pavilion Shopper's Frenzy.

From a smorgasbord of seasonal offerings under Pasky Delights, Mrs. Santa's Sweets Surprises, Take Home Tinsel Treats, Christmas Indulgence to sweet merchandise, gift certificates, goodies and dinner reservations under Pork Princess, it's all here: a comprehensive order form has been provided for easy order placing. Simply fill out the form, detach, fax, mail to the coordinator and voila, your orders can be claimed at your desired pick-up date and time. Now isn't that a piece of cake?!

Orders are accepted until Jan. 6, 2007. But if you place your orders before Nov. 15, 2006, you'd get to enjoy 20 percent discount for every purchase of our Christmas Hampers, and as a special seasonal treat, we are giving away 3 gift certificates and/or tickets for every 10 purchases of Dragon Gift Certificate and 2007 Blue Gifts! Save Dan's Countdown Party tickets.

Holiday ready!

For inquiries or reservations, please call Maya in Pavilion Hotel at 528-2222 extension 2108.

Gifts you would want to give and gifts that you would want to receive are available at delectables fold-out gift guide. With the Pavilion Shopper's Frenzy, there's no such thing as a holiday rush!

The perfect gift that needs no wrapping

MAKE YOUR LIST, CHECKED IT TWICE but still unsure of what to give your friends and family? Teriyaki Boy comes to the rescue with Banquet Boxes guaranteed to make gift-giving and hosting parties simple, elegant and memorable.

You can choose from four varieties sure to delight the people on your holiday list: Teriyaki Boy's Tempura Party Mix, The Mixed Sushi package, the All-California Maki box, and the Gardenia Mix. All come packed in stylish yet recyclable boxes with clear plastics lid showing Teriyaki Boy's yummy treat inside. That way, you won't have to spend more time and money on gift wrapping.

In addition, Teriyaki Boy's Banquet Boxes come in small and large packages to suit your budget, your recipient or the type of party it's for. The Tempura Party Mix is a good to go for P928, or P1,390 for a family party. The Mixed Sushi package is available for P980 or P1,175 for a large Banquet Box. The all-time favorite, the All-California Maki, comes in boxes priced at P975 and P1,280. And Teriyaki Boy's Sushimi Mix offers sashimi of goodness for P1,116, or P1,450 for a party pack.

NEW YEAR'S BLAST COUNTDOWN PARTY AT THE TAAL VISTA HOTEL

What better way is there to celebrate the coming of 2007 but to party at the renovated and reinvented Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay City. Savor the sumptuous buffet dinner, live band and exciting performances...great prizes up for grabs, fireworks display and party all night long with people of all ages. All these for only P1,750 for adults and P750 for kids. Special rates are also available for an overnight stay that include entrance to the party. Call 411-3666 loc 731-734 for room details. See you at the Taal Vista Hotel on Dec. 31, to welcome 2007!

Now Teriyaki Boy branches are located at Robinsons Galleria (Tel. No. 632-9126), Greenhills I (Tel. No. 831-2491), One Corporation Tagaytay (Tel. No. 046-413-4491), and SM The Block (Tel. No. 442-0161) so you can get in or drop by any conveniently-located Teriyaki Boy Restaurant to pick up your Banquet Boxes.

Pinoys Greenwich Pizza 2007 Taste Drive Event

PROUD OF ITS LATEST PIZZA LINE, GREEN, which recently held the Greenwich Pizza 2007 Taste Drive, an exclusive sampling activity for celebrities and friends from the media held at the SM Mall of Asia.

Hosted by TV personality Judiffer Pineda, the highly-anticipated affair was graced by celebrity hunny sandom Chito and Beverly Salazar, TV personality Mariel Rodriguez, Ms. Universe Philippines 2006 Zuleika Ferre, friends from ABS-CBN, GMA 7, Studio 23, Solar Entertainment, ETC., BOY G, Jam 88.3, MR. Rock, Mellow Touch and a lot more superstars! the thrill of Greenwich Pizza 2007 as guests swarm to the delicacies of Green with pizzas and have discovered the many scrumptious treats that Greenwich is so known for.

One of the highlights of the event was the tasting game, wherein three lucky guests got to take home Greenwich gift certificates.

A day after the media launch, the Taste Drive Event then culminated in over 200 Greenwich stores nationwide, which was managed by groups of pizza lovers. Various Greenwich branches nationwide were visited by consumers to sample the wide variety of delectable Greenwich pizza 2007, which enjoy a huge following among consumers owing to their exceptional taste.

During the highly-successful sampling activity, customers were seen relishing bite-after bite of delicious Greenwich pizza, as Green, which generously provided free samples of scrumptious pizza, much to the delight of everyone.

Pinoys truly love truly love – and liking – his pizza lovers who came from every corners of the Philippines, as they all enjoyed the great tasting goodness and deliciousness of Greenwich pizzas.

Enjoy your favorite yummy Green with pizza by visiting your nearest Greenwich outlet or dial 839-4888 and Greenwich's Signalong On Time delivery service will make sure that your orders are delivered fresh and on the dot. Promotional emblems on the other hand, simply have to dial the Greenwich delivery hotline in their respective area.

CELEBRATE NEW YEAR AT DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO

DINE WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO AS you welcome the Year of the Fire Pig this 2007. Partake on "Steak Tasting 'n New Year's Eve and New Year's Day" menus consisting of appetizer, salad, soup, main course, and dessert, prepared by Chef Nguyen. To celebrate the New Year, Benjarong's Thai Chef Set prepare a special set menu on December 31, 2006 and January 01, 2007 which consists of an appetizer, salad, soup, three main course dishes and dessert. This is the perfect meal to start the New Year right. Savor the special Yuletide dinner buffet offered at The Café on December 31, 2006 and January 01, 2007 for only PhP1,888.00++ per person. Guests will be pampered with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine as part of the dinner buffet. Come party on December 31, at the hotel's Grand Ballroom with the New Wonderful Band. Dance and groove to the music of the 80's and 90's with the band's repertoire that made the legendary musical group – "The Best Show Band in Asia." Ticket price is PhP1,750.00 for both buffet dinner, new round of hard tea or soda and party favors. Dinner is at 7:00 p.m. while the show starts at 9:30 p.m. For more information, call 857-3333.

People, Events & Products

One delightful loaf from Gardenia

IN THIS HECTIC & WASTE HEAVILY CENTERED YET BECOMING HEALTH CONSCIOUS, there's a need to find the right food that will give all the nutritional benefits needed to keep us up all day and protect us from deadly diseases. Cars are generally considered as healthy...or healthiest food, being touted consciously as nutritious. It could be observed that a lot of food lovers these days are into as ingredients such as biscuits and chocolates. This is primarily due to the fact that it is loaded almost all of the nutrients and vitamins the body needs to help prevent diseases and to keep us going as stated by The Home Grown Cavass Nutrition. So Gardenia understands everyone's need for healthy and delicious food, it has developed a mouth-watering loaf that will make you enjoy both good taste and nutrition by combining these two magnificent ingredients. The Gardenia Rosey Oat Loaf is made with the goodness of quaker oats and natural honey. Enjoy the scrumptious Gardenia Honey Oat Loaf – for a healthy treat, healthy body, and healthy life.

Yuletide gifts, Acer style

IN A SEASONALLY DEFINITIVE DECISION that gifts to give this Yuletide season for your loved ones? Check out these products by one of the country's leading gifts them. Let's start the rundown on some items in the Acer Yuletide gift list. First up is the famous TRAVELMATE notebook PC. A product of the landmark agreement between Acer and Bucklemaster, the company that produced the world's pioneering and acknowledged touch-type speed devices. It is, by far, the perfect gift for the season, especially for students or business colleagues. Aside from the Bluetooth format, there are also other outstanding notebook computer products from Acer that can be worth giving for Christmas like the Aspire and the TravelMate sub-brands. However, if you think getting a sturdy, combined computing during Christmas may be a bit subtle sentimental, try Acer's outstanding consumer desktop products like the M460, T180 and the T190C. But if you are someone who's into giving something more interesting and out-of-the-ordinary, Acer projectors like the X110 and X1110 are indeed really innovative Yuletide gift items. Try out these products as a unique gift for a designer, and you'll find out what kind of smile and appreciation you'll get from a loved one because that's what the holiday season is all about–bringing good tidings and cheer.

This week's Super Selections lineup is explosive—literally

SUPER! SELECTIONS

Fireworks and footwear

By Pat Pastor

DON'T GET US WRONG, we love the giving part, but we're so glad we can get Christmas shopping behind us—at least for another eleven or so months. The mad lines, the crazy traffic, other cash-wasting mistake-stages we mistakenly call holidays we're spent a huge chunk of Christmas funds the mall.

This week's Super Selections honors things that you can keep for yourself—or, in the case of Enchanted Kingdom's fireworks, enjoy with your family.

But if you decide to use them as last working-stiffers, we won't blame you either. Because really, they're good enough to share.

Shine is the new black. Metal. Furburnees. Footwear is making a strong statement: adios is fun, but Sun Chasik cuts the sporty and lightweight pairs from Maxwell's Relay Series.

Enchanted Kingdom is your backyard. Everyone knows that when you go to Enchanted Kingdom, you need to stay for the fireworks. But not everyone knows that you can now bring home the theme park's fireworks. Enchanted Kingdom's

comfortable material (rather, which we love).

Also in the new black: Metal. Furburnees. Footwear is making a strong statement: adios is fun, but Sun Chasik cuts the sporty and lightweight pairs from Maxwell's Relay Series.

Enchanted Kingdom is your backyard. Everyone knows that when you go to Enchanted Kingdom, you need to stay for the fireworks. But not everyone knows that you can now bring home the theme park's fireworks. Enchanted Kingdom's consumer fireworks are also produced by Philippine Fireworks, which is in charge of Enchanted Kingdom's fireworks display. Philippine Fireworks, which is a consistent winner in the park's annual fireworks competition, promises that the consumer fireworks are safe, user-friendly and have been manufactured according to world-class standards. Enchanted Kingdom Fireworks are available at Enchanted Kingdom in Santa Rosa, Laguna, at their Makati Sales Office at the Ground Floor, The Fahrenheit Condominium, 132 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City and at Mikati Gear. They will also be available in Shoppertee and beyond. For more info, call 867-3006 or 838-23-11 to 16, local 31 and look for Ms Maria Talled or Ms Anna Lee Lantoyo.

Fukuhakuro Inc. Fukuhakuro is a very popular Japanese tradition. Around the holidays, shops sell fukuhakuro—gift bags or packages that contain unknown and varied merchandise that are sold for a large discount. We, you don't know exactly what you're buying, only one thing's for certain—that you are getting a big discount. Because this Uemura wants everyone to enjoy this Japanese tradition, they are offering Fukuhakuro gifts for a limited time. The gifts are packed anonymously—and shoppers cannot peek at the contents. Each of the three versions are filled with current star products: whitening oil, eyelash curler, mascara, limited edition eyeshadow palettes and more) of the brand, worth double the value shoppers will pay for. Visit the Shu Uemura Counters in Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

Tell your mom Philippines. If you're a writer, if you love writing, if you love reading, if you enjoy telling words and letting them take you places, this magazine is for you. Visit www.arts-englishpinoy.com.

Calendar for a reason. We love animals, we love PETA and we love PEDS. Rescued calendar for 2007. Featuring rescued animals, the calendar's pages will not only help you keep track of important dates, it also reminds you of the importance of taking care of our furry, feathered and finny friends.

Time for a change. If you feel like you deserve it, strap on a new Seiko/Spring watch—those from their Color Ceramic Collection for women or the rugged Hammer or Alpine 10 900 watch for Men.

Dance dance evolution

IT WAS THE SUMMIT CHALLENGE. It dazzling SPIRIT and it was one of teen spirit and extraordinary. The finals of the 2006 Hot 1000 Dance Competition "Hi Five 3 was an adrenalin fueled spectacle that left everyone in awe until the very end. The event brought together 15 of the country's hottest student dance groups under one spotlight.

After two months of elimination, dancers representing the Colegio de Santa Rosa Makati, winner of the very first Usana Teen Synergy Dance Competition in 2004. They were again named as champion of the year's dance contest and they bagged the P200,000 cash prize, a plaque and scholarship grants sponsored by the Asian College of Science and Technology (ACAST) for all of the group's members.

Entering in the line of Modern/Lyrical, the group from the International School of Manila (ISM) impressed the judges. Their entry, an rendition of ballet, jazz and tap dance moves earned them the P100,000 cash and a plaque as the event's proud 1st runner up.

Last year's grand winner, School of Saint Anthony was this year's 2nd runner up, winning P50,000 cash and a plaque. They also won the Best Costume/Choreography award.

The troupe from Colegio de San Lorenzo was awarded with the Most Enthusiastic Fan Group award.

There were also a battery dance featuring young models from the competing high schools. Hotel Intel Bamboo hosted the awards ceremony.

Watch out for a bigger and bolder Usana Teen Synergy Dance Competition next year.

Usana nutritionals line dishes are available in all leading department stores and 30 Ayo Express nationwide including Market! Market!, Robinson's Supermarket stores Galleria and Shoemart/the Manila Mall.

No trick, just triple treats

SUN CELLULAR HAS TRIPLE Treats waiting to shower you and your friends with phone, gadgets, cash, even your dream car.

You and two of your friends can win the coolest prizes weekly, including Robinsons SM Gift Certificates, 24/7 Call and Text and

Get Unlimited Loads, Red Status, Philips DVD Players, Canon Powershot Digital Cameras, 40GB Sony Ericsson W810i and W900 3G Cell phones, Canon Mini DV Camcorders, IBM Thinkcentre PC units, and featuring UCD 32" widescreen Viewsonic 40" television sets with Home Theatre Systems, brand new Mazda 3 1.6 LS sedans and one million pesos cash.

To join the promo, register through SMS by texting REG<space>Name<space>Last Name<Address and send to 333. Just text reply with the "group name" which you will send to your buddies and other potential members. To join the second and third batches/numbers, text to 2209 <space>Group Name<Text Name<Last Name<Address and send to 333.

Once registered, your group is automatically included in the raffle promo. By loading up on Sun regular load credit, 24/7 Unlimited Call and Text or Sun Unlimited cards, upstart cards, unlimited numbers, Xpress Load and Doubling Station regular and unlimited reloads and 333 call cards, the group gets even more chances.

Call the Sun Triple Treats Hotline at 209-8000 and 209 call free. You may also log on to their website at www.suncellular.com.ph. Promo runs until Jan. 30, 2007.

Tatagang nakakalula ka sa ganda ng Enchanted Kingdom Fireworks! Sa dami ng alpha na nanonood pagabot, tyak na mapa ang kabit anong okasyon – birthday man o fiesta. Guaranteed sale at unforgettable pa. Kaya hanbi na ng DI Fireworks and light up your neighborhood!

All Enchanted Kingdom Fireworks are manufactured by Philippine Fireworks, under license from Enchanted Kingdom, Inc., and are quality assured by Safety Standard of Enchanted Line, Antonio, Manila, Marketing and Sales: Makati area and Luzon: R. Francisco Reyes, Rizal's Principal Area: Enchanted Kingdom Park and Mount Sapo Alto.

Park Address: San Lorenzo Ruiz, Brgy. Lot Santa Rosa, Laguna in Metro Manila Area Office: 6/F, The Fahrenheit Condominium, 132 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City, Philippines, Makati: 840-23-11 to 16, 812-70-03 and 867-3006 Email: fahrenheit@pinoy.com.ph

Enchanted Kingdom
Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay Road, Barangay Don Jose, Santa Rosa, Laguna
www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph

Philippine Fireworks Manufacturing Corporation
Antonio Rodriguez Avenue, Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City

Super's Inferno: A guide to the 9 circles of hell (and which of them to watch first)

By Pepe Diokno

SURE, YOU GOT A TON OF Noah shots and "Shuttle Princess Diehard" gave the Christmas box office a fine push) ups that you get a couple hundred pesos from your money and wrong. Now, there are only three things you can do with that money: One, buy yourself more "Cabinet." Two, treat yourself to the punishment thing-to-draw-all-to-your-effeminates-at-the-cellcenter thing, a.k.a. a parade order at StarSuite. And three, give your money to priests.

The third option is the best option in the universe because priests will take your money and use it to advance the development of the country. Having said that, it's probable that priests will take your money and give to the ailing local film industry—where movie priests will use your money to watch the year's crop of KMFF films. And that, dear Super readers, is a good thing—because only priests can perform exorcisms.

Now we can be our priests—if we didn't have them, who else would tell the populous what to think on national issues? And so, we decided to help our priests by publishing this, Super's Inferno. Think hell has 9 circles of hell, like your set have nine films from full Reapers yourselves, dear priests—getting three circles each sure, and at the end has the supreme challenge. Just for fun, decided to call himself Jose Jesus Jesus. And he makes three! He makes films!

Circle I: "Mano Po 5: Gua Ai Di"

In this circle, you'll see: a fight scene between Richard Gutierrez and Christine Reyes. I'm not kidding. Since who gets the first slap of Te's you getting "Urban Sentinel / Where the F*** is that?"

This circle is a sad shell. As Christine Reyes's is this interventional singer and Richard Gutierrez is this average Filipino guy, and Angel Locsin is this—both they all have the look for. And—wait, it stopped being believable at the word "cute," up.

The twist this movie probably has in store for you: That angel Locsin is actually a man, who is not Christine. Oh wait, no, that's not the twist we. After this is revealed, Richard goes on a journey to find his lavender-loving Christian, who goes "Yay" and runs off with angel. See, this makes it a perfect ending, it is closure in an interventional film format—Mother Life is a smart woman's life. Despite the very dark looks.

Realization of the day ... Mother Life might just take that last paragraph and turn it into a 2007 KMFF entry.

Circle II: "Tatlong Baraha"

Three oppressed Filipinos during the Spanish regime—a cowardly lawyer, a naturally challenged man and a beautiful harbinger who blessed with special powers to help their followers. There is no need to spend a cent here.

In this circle, you'll meet: The entire Legal clue and Presencia Rosendo.

Why you haven't heard of this movie: Like Legal's been busy making female work.

Now! It, like Legal's still a opening!! Yes!!!

Watch out for a sequel! The Legals are currently involved in a production called, "The demise of the Philippine government." Oh, I make up that title—you all know Legal only speaks Filipino in the movies.

And, the real reason you haven't heard of this movie: Mother Life.

Circle III: "Ligalig"

A law clerk is mistaken for the boss after a golf and is sent for trouble. At the same time, prostitutes are being murdered by a mysterious killer. This is the most chaotic synopsis in Super history. Clare Montado wins the "Most to fill" award.

In this circle, you'll meet: Claire Montano.

Those to save on production costs by: $100. Cut your cuts.

Why nobody saw this movie, but you might like it: Their names up. Hope there.

Does the title of the movie sound like a threat by you? No, it sounds like one of those rainy nights films with a one-word title and bad production values, that tries too hard to make it spoiled Ish.

Is this film like the trailer? Honestly what's the difference?

Circle IV: "Matakot Ka Sa Karma"

In this circle, you'll meet: Gretchen Barretto, Angelica Panganiban, and Rica Peralejo.

Number of segments that seem to switch up of: Three.

Amount of creative juice it took to write each of them: three episodes: None. Same as the episodes are called, "Ajumahin," "Kotse," and "Sikuhin"—that's

Visit the nearest Compaq Retailer today!

western director Joey Reyes looking around the room.

Watch out for the sequel! Joey Javier Reyes has a whole lineup full of films to make, including one of the most personal homeschool films, "My Glowing Toothbrush."

Why parents need to watch the filmmakers: Every now and then, parents are going to run out of money—whether it be, say, economic depression, or they're going to invest in a story involving the Sto. Niño. It's the Filipino version of "Chuckie."

This film is cursed! ... everyone—me like Gretchen Barretto is in—is going to die from watching this movie.

Synopsis: In the film, there is an antique shop, which sells pieces of the furniture that come alive. The three episodes in the movie all watch the items from pieces arise. And stuff.

Circle V: "Enteng Kabisote 3: The Legend Goes On and On"

Since the last time we saw Enteng, he has turned into a materialistic businessman. Meanwhile, an alien named Zarkor warns up with evil intentions named Lance Bonnaig in order to save his intergalactic and wife, Jinx. With the fate of the world in the real Rodrigo hands—or no—he, in turn, teams up with his Magnets to fight Zarkor and his cons. Interesting. Very interesting.

In this circle, you'll meet: Vic Sotto, Ariane Rotenca, G Toengi, and Pio Balbuena.

Why this movie is so scary: Take Vic Sotto and Ariane Rotenca, both, like, 40 or old, wrinkly-ass, pass his prime, ugly vanished, do-well-at-comic-timing, relentless to be a sexy and Classical. Hilly, weird, and, the other cast Vic forms is just fringe.

Why this movie sells: People come to smile for the opening thing. The ticket price for this film grew you that, so only one, and the kiddie/green feeling that so many who you see in this theater, you will always be a G Toengi in the Philippines. Always.

Circle VI: "Zsa Zsa Zaturnah, Ze Movie"

A pop fashionista discovers a giant rock that grants one superpower when one swallows it. And he (and Jinx) is filth his superpowers, he takes on the persona of Zsa Zsa Zaturnah and fights evil. Wait, sexy and dance numbers.

In this circle, you'll meet: The embodiment of everything Joel Lamangan wishes he could be, henceforth, "Zsa Zsa."

The one thing you need to make a comedy sell in the Philippines: Gessons. Everyone laughs at gay people. Gessons, you just have to look at them on TV, and you go, note! Hahaha ... haha ... ha ... Chokoleit. Hahaha ... haha ... ha. Loveahhhh.

Why I won't say anything bad about this movie: It's campy—it's supposed to be badly-made, sappy, and predictable, and anyone who points that out is a pompous, humorless prick. Much Frasco.

Translation of the paragraph above: If Joel Lamangan movie, and anyone who says anything bad about it, Joel Lamangan movie dies instantly.

Circle VII: "Super Hoyo!"

An adulthood friends learn that their parents are the most powerful superheroes in the land when their parents are taken hostage by a masked supervillain. They then discover that they, too, possess their own super powers ... and yeah yeah yeah.

In this circle, you'll meet: Jennylyn Mercado, Mikki Mercado, Jennylyn Mercado, Jennylyn Mercado, Andrew Muhlach, and the creative force of Quark Henares' filmmaking ability. And then, all in all, everyone everything.

Watch this film if ... You need inspiration for Bad Flash homeless indigenous you have due to the start of school next year.

... and if you love ... Jennylyn Mercado is going. Same as Pinoy Henares. "But then you say inanimate!" Oh, yeah, Quark Henares is brilliant—and his film moments are no battle for today.

Circle VIII: "Shake, Rattle and Roll 8"

In this circle resides: Between Melly.

Number of segments this movie is made up of: Three.

Why that sounds familiar: Theres's the same number Rich, etc., "Manoker Ko Sa Kanya?"

Why they will never make enough of these films: Can you really think of another movie title that expresses horror and comedy at the same time? Oh wait, damn, "Manoker Ko Sa Kanya."

Why it's up for best picture: The Filipino industry just need to do more without "Shake, Rattle and Roll." Did be ... before. And never to mainstream Filipino film industry wants "better." Don't like ... Inc.

Is Filipino audience is to dumb ... "Shake, Rattle and Roll" is grossing so much just because of name recall.

This episode, "1:00 Hour" serves a group of party organizers tasked to prepare a children's party circle 1:00. But of a new predicament. And, hmm it's on the 13th floor all full heights hour. Duh. Another episode, "Eyes," full of a naughty child boy who discovers his mommy is a vampire by LRC transformation of a stripper of when a student breaks loose and runs to confess.

Circle IX: "Kaual, Kaual, Kaual!"

Though Jed and Angie are of an Style couple, they seem to be madly in love with each other, to what they parents from first to suppose to the 10, he proposes to dump. But being wedding preparations, and conflict between Jed's and Angie's families, make them realize that married life and what it's not quite.

In this circle, you'll meet: Aiza Seguerra, and you, Andrea and Boy.

Why this movie's in this year's festival: Star Cinema couldn't find Sabrinitas, non-controversial love interests for Pinky Bonsual and Jiam Milby. Yeah, only Member Lily has the balls to go for horror stories—the witch is brave. Gabby Lopez, you sissy.

The ugly ugly truth: This movie actually isn't bad. Cara Parone's in it.

Translation of the line above: It's a formula movie ... the only way you can screw up wrong with that is if you're Joel Lamangan. Or Quark Henares.

Editor's note: Opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the entire staff of Super (and its publication.)

Super 2

1. Helena Belmonte

THE DESIGNERS:

2. Choc and Yvettebelgaso
3. John Paras
4. John Herrera
5. Chris Diaz
6. Debbie Co
7. Czarina Villa
8. Ferdi Abuel

27 people to watch out for in 2007

Tim Yap

PRESSURE HAS NEVER FELT this good. The individuals who we include in Super's annual "People To Watch Out For" list mean often than not make it to the top. After the list is printed and broadcast to the gazillions of readers that this paper services, they have no choice but to prove themselves for the next 365 days of the year.

Other people rake their lives and careers to the next level. Actors take on challenging roles to add spice to their filmography. Models and celebrities take it in endorsement deals. Magazine editors go on a mad scramble to book those personalities for photo shoots to appear on their pages, and so on and so forth.

We've declared "11" girls, predicted career moves, tapped a person's killing and starred our wrath to those who we think really deserve it.

Don't get us wrong—there were others who failed in children, too. Investment in the "wrong" things, made some bad career moves, and slept with the wrong people. Some just couldn't take the pressure.

But here pressure is good for you. It pushes you to go beyond your comfort zone and tells you that you can do better. That you can be a better person. That you can lead a better life. For others.

SONY HANDYCAM

Capture your memories in full motion & sound that can last for a lifetime.

Each moment is unique and to make them truly unforgettable, you can record them using the DVD Handycam Series. DVD Handycams series are compact and feature easy operation. Further, whatever you record on the 8cm DVD disc can be played back instantly on your DVD player! So you can pass on your memories for generations to come!

SONY Christmas Treasures 2006

FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND

A LITN BY ED ABOGA

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY BY PINOY LIBASAN

NUTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

LOVEBONITS BY ELIZABETH CHICANGCO

ATOMO AND WEEBY BY LYN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN WALSH

RIKO MACHINE BY PINOY LIBASAN

HEBOKOMICS BY JORGE TIQUIO

TULDOK BY NAPS AND TATUM HILARIO LING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

9	7							
3	1				9	2	7	
					6		4	
					2	7	9	
	3	5	7					
	5		6					
	8	3	1				2	4
							6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Answer to previous puzzle

8	6	7	5	4	1	2	3	9
2	4	5	6	3	9	1	8	7
1	3	9	8	2	7	5	4	6
9	9	1	2	7	8	6	4	3
5	7	4	1	3	6	8	9	2
3	2	6	5	9	4	8	7	1
4	8	6	7	1	2	8	3	5
7	1	5	9	6	3	4	2	8
9	3	2	4	8	5	7	1	6

DIFFICULTY ★★★★

9. Say Alonzo

Only a few have survived after being the Big Brother House-turned-fairy-godmother-like sibling triangle called Jiliana, Jet Say. Have managed to keep afloat in the pocket-size PBB TV series? Missing "Kuya" out" (plus some worries under her belt). Say said she's a lot bigger—and we know that when that time comes, we'll all be following.

10. Paolo Lorenzana

In this city where socialites of the world are a dime a dozen, exclusivity are hard to find. One craving for the Eva Tuzon 'n' vixen on extra-sized scale. Paolo Lorenzana is THE young outlier to read, be overtaken. The voice on the one-man-club editor of Manual magazine and your friends and fellow Digest

11. Nicole Yulo

12. Vhong Navarro

13. Chad of Pinoy Dream Academy

14. Kabisish in Manila

15. Michelle Asence

16. Gian Magdangal and Miss Marcelo of Philippine Idol

19. Violeta Payta

20. Mario Cornejo

21. Driven Manila

22. John Pagaduan of Sha Uemura

23. Florabel Co

24. Charles Lu

25. Tina Tinio and Tessa Dragon

26. Making Heroes

27. Claire and Ricky Dickne

27 people to watch out for in 2007

From page D1

Now that I've channeled my inner Oprah, let me persist to you, in Digest-typical half fashion, my annual list for those who will lead to the year's fourth estate. Here are Digest's 27 people to watch out for in 2007.

Get your checkbooks ready (yes, it's 2 days to go 28, 2007) and remember these 27 trailblazers.

17. Maritess Allen

18. Chef Rolly Laudico

BPI EXPRESS CREDIT

Cole Haan
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We'll take you farther.

A super happy birthday, Maurice!

Ho ho, Mo Mo!

By Tim Yap
Photos by Chato Gutierrez

BLESSED WITH THE GIFT OF an generation gap, social slide builder Maurice Arcadio turns his candles on (or turned yet another year younger, broke and more youthful than ever.

Showered with more by than expected at the iconic Chowie, Bobby Benedicto, Bubbles, Jackie, Mikee Romero, Jake Ejercito, Tommy Tambunting, Mel Tiangco, his soup than the ballroom to the ballroom to the bar and beyond—as he just stayed with his husbanless guests, all keen on celebrating his birthday with him. As he thought it's his last, perhaps? Or how the world...

A Tropang Yang Tuesday is the hangout. Bebe Gandin attended the ride. Vidal Tofinio ruled the Junior Beat. Andrew Gan Dingco carried his beloved, but not indulgent dog Mo. Chef Boy Logro and Jessica Soho were there to celebrate with Mo. Ms. Soho and Logro were in charge of the food. Mo's friends Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Ricky Carandang were there to celebrate with Mo. Ms. Prieto-Valdes and Carandang were in charge of the drinks.

Closest to the hearts of hosts, Mo Mo, and many many more to many.

SATURDAY Special

AFTER THE TALENT SEARCH IS OVER

Now, the really hard work begins

By Nestor U. Torre

TELEVISION has launched many talent searches that have produced scores of winners. All have been decreed and officially crowned "stars of tomorrow," but only a few succeed in becoming certified show biz luminaries who can still albums and headline hit shows.

What happens to the also-rans? Some drop out, but others keep plugging, hoping to make it the second time around. (like Jennifer Hudson with "Dreamgirls.")

Musical

But not many musical movies are being produced, so the non-Jennifers have to find other ways to keep performing and putting food on the table.

For those struggling many, a new source of income has presented itself of late: Private parties and company functions. Those performances may not get much mileage in the media, but they pay much more than just a pretty penny.

For instance, the first Asian on Idol, Kelly Clarkson, gets a really cool $200,000 for performing at somebody's party! Last year's winner, Taylor Hicks, earns "only" $150,000, while Fabio Stanfield (underdog) earns $75,000 a gig.

However you look at it, those are big bucks and add up to a very tidy annual income for former Idols and their runners-up!

Profitable

On the local show biz front, private performances have always been a profitable one as has even the singers who aren't big draw. We know of some multimillionaires who earn P80,000 for three songs...and they're performing all over the place, so they're really raking it in.

In terms of local talent searches, it looks like "Star-struck" has the best record for actually producing stars (instead of just winners).

HERNANI AND MERCADO. Winners who have become certified stars.

HICKS. Makes his big performance for private parties and company functions.

GMA-7's pioneering talent idol has made stars of the likes of Mark Herras, Jennylyn Mercado, Marky Cielo, Karmina Ilarde and Iza Blanco.

Those young stars are as busy as bees on TV and in the movies—proof positive that "Starstruck's" outstanding persona needs. Other idol haven't been as productive, sad to say, so they have a lot to learn from GMA's signature talent search.

Star stars have to effective follow-through. Some (like contestant themselves with producing winners, without strategically lining up work and building up activities for them, so they eventually fail to get their talent careers going.

Consistency

Also key to consistency. For instance, Sanchez Park and Jhoni Angeles were major finds some years ago, but they missed their advantage, and their careers faltered.

It's a good thing that Jaydan is currently waging a comeback of sorts, but they has to handle much more to get back on track—that is, if he's still interested.

The wonderment is, after practically killing themselves to come out on top, talents and TV networks suddenly take the winning for granted and presume that the champion's promised reachen is a sure thing.

Also, winning is only the start of a very long process, and nothing is assured until the winner proves to be a hard worker, and his sponsor/any TV station is prepared to hard him up...all the way to the actual. (unless of the promised, or the guy of gold, at the end of the show his rainbow)

Year-end wish list for the TV industry

By Bobi Corrales

I WISH THAT THE influential TV medium would resolve to accomplish these improvements in 2007:

1. Could the stations' bigwigs remind themselves of the influence they have on the audience, especially the youth?

Good values

They should produce more positive youth-oriented shows that inculcate good values in the young. What's happened to traditional Filipino values that set us apart as a people only a few decades ago?

2. Why must entertainment have a sexual connotation at every turn? Why can't we have variety shows without sexy dancers grinning on them all the time? Do we consider why young girls dream of becoming Anjanette and Gloria later on?

3. Could newscasters enjoy the news without leering opinions, and stress the

SM CINEMA

movietime SHOWTIME

Your life as a movie

LIGALIG

A serial killer Lindsay Ringgold is on the make, crowning public with an ordinary last dinner (Cesar Montano) and his girlfriend (Iwa Moto Cross) where he has a connection with in his past. When the three face each other, it seems that there is no escape.

NOW SHOWING at SM Cinema nationwide

IMAX

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SATURDAY Special

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2006

'Imbestigador' shows harsh aspects of lives lived on the edge

By Lila Buringan Alvarez

YOU MIGHT THINK YOU'VE already seen everything on "Dr. Phil" about physical, verbal and psychological abuse, but that's nothing compared to what was shown recently on "Imbestigador," hosted by Mike Enriquez on Channel 7.

More than graphically depicting memory's many ills, the series shows how corrupt values can have disastrous effects on our loved ones and adversely affect other people, as well.

Footage

In one of its recent episodes, the program showed how a woman lost up her paralyzed husband. When she left their shanty for work, one of her two young children took over the abusive practice by pouring her mother on her father and prodding the latter to beat her with a hammer!

The next scene showed the wife dragging her emaciated husband by the arm while he lay naked outside their residence.

It took some time for their neighbors and the local barangay to report this atrocity to the authorities. The battered man was then taken to a hospital, where he was diagnosed to have suffered a stroke. He couldn't speak, and he couldn't move his legs.

The couple's children were taken to a DSWD shelter, while the woman was brought to a psychologist, who said her coping skills were driven more by anger and bitterness than compassion. She was advised to undergo therapy—but she was still allowed to "take care" of her husband in the hospital!

The same episode featured the story of a young model wannabe and her mother, who complained about a cabinet using her unretouched photos without permission. But, the member did not complain about how the glossy magazines had exploited her daughter!

True, it was a case of copyright infringement, but that's beside the point. Instead, the mother got a windfall from the silicon of the tabloid. Her daughter, she was told, should stop posing semi-nude for any publications!

In other "Imbestigador" episodes, unfinished and substandard roads and bridges were featured. Insurances were shown admitting to the fact that government funds intended for the client's construction were pocketed by corrupt politicians!

ENRIQUEZ. Hosts the searing public affairs show.

Destitute man

Another episode featured a destitute man who sold one of his eyes to feed him for two years! It was enough to make our blood boil.

"Imbestigador" has shown man's cruelty and indifference. Filipinos brag about our being the "only Christian nation in Asia"—but, many use nothing to do with how we treat our neighbors and loved ones, or how we live our faith. It's a sad truth. Some Christians are a disgrace to one another.

Year-end wish list for the TV industry

From page E1

grunt and misdemeanor?

4. Could stations spend their money on productions with local talents, stories and aspirations? As a frustrated friend once stated, "Street-smart dan sa international, national is enough!" I agree. Programs are now view from Taipei, Korea and elsewhere may have amazing shows, but these aren't the stories here. They confuse our young.

5. American viewers do not take Jerry Springer and Maury Povich seriously. So, why are vulgar and gimmicky hosts given time on national television? Springer and Povich's shows make pandemonium and crass behavior acceptable. Note that the disgruntled parties in these two talk shows are constantly "bleeped", because of vulgar language. Who needs shows like these? Certainly not the local audience!

6. Could TV bigwigs create talent shows that encourage original talents, and not mere copycats of foreign stars? There's no doubt we have great talents. So, why don't we urge them to express themselves their own way?

Composers

To begin with, why don't we encourage them to sing local composers' tunes? After all, it's a simple case of supply and demand. If local talents don't demand domestic composers, who would see composers create songs like "Isod," "Kay tiagan ng Ating Bandila," "Kapantay ay Langit," "Bisaya Walang Sinugbong" and "Kanlilyong Buhangin?"

Imelda Warton and Yoshiye Valencia made a valiant effort decades ago in popularizing local music, which resulted in the creation of hundreds of musical gems now known as Pinoy Pop.

The news brought about various issues in our own music and culture. Let's not forget that we likewise have "Dahil sa 'Yo" and hundreds of other handiwar just waiting to be interpreted by today's youth.

7. I wish screaming gays on television would stop their cheap behavior once and for all. They are perpetuating the stereotypical notion that all gays are noisy, silly and, therefore, should not to be taken seriously.

8. Stop cultivating the culture of gossip.

9. Stop the culture of patronage via these "charity" shows.

Value of labor

10. Stop developing the culture of mendicancy. Instead, teach the poor how to fish, and introduce to the viewers the value of labor.

11. Television should inspire pride in a culture that empowers its people to attend independently. With globalization, the power of TV should be harnessed so that we can realize our place in the sun.

Montgomery Regency Hotel

Sarah takes a welcome breather

By Rico P. Acido

IN SARAH GERONIMO'S LATEST ALBUM, "Becoming," the teen queen shows listeners some even more mature and matronly feel to the lineup's radio-friendly first track, "I Still Believe (a Loving You," for instance, her strong, gliding interpretation showcases the song's beautiful melody and least her sound ample, sheer personal relishing. In fact, for the track's final last minutes, she even unveils a lovely head tone.

Original tracks

Made up mostly of original tracks that display her beautiful pipes, Geronimo's album experiments with different sounds. There's the upbeat, pop-powered "Inspirito Ko", the Latin-tinged "Por Mas Que Quiero" to RnB", they jump "After Love", the bossanovalike tunes, "Sad I'm in Love Again" and "Ruby Blue"; then dance tracks, "Don't Say Nothing," and the inspirational "Born Is All We Know."

Fans who are used to hearing female singing soulful ballads won't be disappointed with "Tulog Ka Nga Ba Aking Mahal," "Kathegen," "Alaalahin" and the beautiful "Crazy My Love."

While the album isn't consistently successful in detail of the songs are melodically and lyrically multidirectional, it nevertheless heartening to hear Sarah spreading her musical wings by trying new types of songs that wouldn't have been considered in the lineup album classy fare albums.

Most singers these days take the fastest route to fame by wooing ears on hot airplay. Sarah, it's easier to promote songs that have easy recall. So, it really takes courage—and a sense of adventure—to release a more complex collection of songs for pop music's fussiest pleasure fans.

GERONIMO: Sarah her musical wings.

Career trajectory

This healthy career trajectory is a welcome breather for the teen queen, who has of late been alternately cast well-sung and popular—but not necessarily better—as maker of songs like "Binibini Wishing Singalong."

In a few years, it would be great to hear Sarah sing more love classics—from chestbreast to pop hits of the '70s and '80s. But now, however, let us allow the gently singing champ to experiment with songs that are perfect for her age.

A new horizon for M.Y.M.P.

By Rosy Umeni

M.Y.M.P.: JOJO SUBIDUBE and Gino Ilustrado—have a new album. "How Did It Be?" with songs evincing their maturity in composition.

"How Romeo," their third album, features the lead single, "With You." The other half of the album, with the tenets of reverie, includes the popular track, "Dito Ay Sumasaiyo Sa."

Blessings

Jojo contributes two new songs: The first track, "With You," and "Si Lumalayo." Jojo couldn't be happier these days, she confesses. "Everybody for all the blessings that God has given me—family, friends, and the special someone (whom I share my feelings with."

Gino still likes M.Y.M.P.'s musical arrangements. He reconcile the song, "Forever and a Day." He shares: "I'm pleased with the quality of work that we've done on this record. We even have a Christmas single ("Iisa It's Christmas")."

The seven-year young "With You," is a soothing mid-tempo pop tune. They also cover Bachman's "Gray For You," the Jose "You Got It All," Sinatra's "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," and the Police's "Every Breath You Take."

Other notable rare ballads remakes of Paul Simon's "Only Remind Me of You" and Alan's "Lost Heaven."

Time to reflect

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW Year: "The coming of a new year is a time we look back and reflect on our accomplishments, experiences, and most importantly our relationship with the Supreme Being."

"If we are the mistakes we've made, we can avoid making the same errors again. A foolish person puts his finger in the flame and gets burned scorched. So, a wise man keeps his hands and avoids the dangers that threaten stability."

Rainbow

"Just as we can't hold on to a rainbow, we can't hold on to time. We can't hold on to years, just as we can't hold on to each passing year."

"Time flies quickly for those who fill each moment with meaningful work. It tickles slowly for those who see no purpose in living."

"Those who make good use of their time are those who know how to afford the value and purpose of human existence."

"Lazy people waste time; the foolish waste opportunities, and the unthinking waste resources. But people who love their why cannot help how."

"A man's greatness is not measured by material resources, but by intellectual wisdom and traits."

"You can't stop the passing of time, but you can change how you live/earn."

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Howard

INDIE FILMMAKERS hope for better harvest in 2007

By Rica Arevalo

DELIMUNDO. Urges everyone not to forget the true spirit of independent filmmaking.

THE YEAR 2006 saw independent filmmakers rule local award-giving bodies and make waves in film festivals abroad. For 2007, here are their wishes:

Benjie Garcia (director of "Batad"): "More multimedia producers with bigger budgets. And a bigger audience for independent films!"

Dennis Marasigan ("In Siok's Dreamin Bed"): "To make more films with a bigger chance of being seen by more people. A stronger and sustainable Independent Filmmakers Cooperative and a wider membership and more support."

Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil ("Mga Pusong Ouha"): "Let a thousand Flowers Bloom, bloom and bloom!"

Raymond Lee (producer of "Mumbai Obsession"): "A steady production of homefilms, a stable infrastructure (movie cameras), and a bigger local audience."

Commitment

Paolo Villaluna ("Sleepwalk"): "I wish the indie community would not waiver in its commitment to make brave, fresh, and challenging films that underscore self-expression, advocacy and social responsibility. I wish for more story-driven films with more diversity and different ideologies."

Dan Zed Mumalo ("Nepenthe"): "Surely having more movie theaters say, screen my indie filmmaking, at least by doing successful indie filmmakers."

Isabelle Min Jo ("Sleepwalk"): "For the community to do more films, to continue to work as a team, and to push the envelope of mainstream thinking despite limited resources."

Development

Mes, may our audiences grow, patronize, and understand this exciting movement not as a flash in a pan, but as an ongoing development for the growth of Philippine cinema."

Rhod Camilon ("Batad"): "More character development of documentary films, para lalo pang lumaki ang audience. I hope gumawa pa lalo ang mamera ng mga pelikulas para dagsa tayong ang audience, patronage would spread. If we see good projections in cinemas, then digital would no longer be considered the 'poorer cousin' of the 35mm film."

Most rewarding

After the play, Tita invited us to take a post-theater snack at Pilita Corrales' Snacks and Cafe, just a stone's throw away from Music Museum. That began the most sweet, enchanting phase of our already sweet evening.

An enchanted evening with Tita, Nikki, Jesi, Pilita, Angie and other friends-for-life

By Nestor U. Torre

OUR ADMIRATION FOR legendary actress and beauty icon Tita Muñoz knows no bounds. We appreciate not just her superlative thespic talent, but also her wisdom and fortitude. Now 80 years old, Tita is wheelchair-bound and has to contend with major health issues that would confound and defeat most people.

And yet, Tita remains her optimistic view of life and shining faith in God...a riveting example for all people with major problems of their own to have and master.

Magical wrap

For this reason, we treasure our occasional dates in and nights out with Tita, who has a magical way of making an ordinary evening special.

Most recently, we took her to the Music Museum to catch a performance of the New Stone Company's staging of Eve Ensler's "The Good Body," starring Monique Wilson, Pinky Amador and Jaime Fabregas.

Problem: Tita was in a wheelchair, and it wasn't clear how access to the theater could be arranged. Happily, play director Rito Asilo offered an inspired if unusual solution: He asked three members of the cast crew to help us lift Tita and her wheelchair up the Music Museum's many steps, so she could enjoy the show.

Tita was reluctantly appreciative and had a great time watching the play. She was heard exclaiming that it had revived her inner interest in acting! When we heard this, we were overjoyed, because we've always assured today's theater buffs in saying that's tomorrow's culture...if only it is exciting, so they can revive their standard of excellence...upwards! Will we finally get our wish early next year?

Most rewarding

After the play, Tita invited us to take a post-theater snack at Pilita Corrales' Snacks and Cafe, just a stone's throw away from Music Museum. That began the most sweet, enchanting phase of our already sweet evening.

TRIBUTE. Admired for her fearlessness talents, wisdom and fortitude.

CORRALES. Never one to let a surprise her friend's presence with a song.

MENDEZ. Ace stylist enjoys well-deserved success.

In Pilita's, a veritable reunion of old friends ensued, and Tita beamed with delight. Nikki Koo and Angie Ferreras, the celebrated Wing Tam, were first in greet our mutual friend.

Angie, the daughter of our mutual friend and retired Rizal dela Cruz, was visiting from the States, and shared that she and Nikki had just gamered on the "walking hills...gone" shows of Germaine Montero, another old chum.

Tita was also delighted when Jesi Mariñas arrived and greeted her with warmth and genuine friendship.

An onlooker is formed us that the surprise near-has. It's since to his name, and is riding the crest of well-deserved success in his field. Even better, that success has definitely not gone to his head.

Enter the acting friend, Jesi toasted Tita, and then made plans to see each other soon.

Unexpected musical treat

Finally, Pilita Corrales herself arrived from an evening performance. Despite her feeling a bit tired, she sang some songs for the people at her bistro, who were blown away by the unexpected musical treat. That's how much Pilita loves her calls, and is working hard to make it a regular exercise.

The company managers, the renaissance years were scintillating, but it was getting really late, so Tita bade her friends adieu...but not for long, we trust. Friends for life like Tita, Jesi, Pilita, Nikki and Angie are too precious to be taken for granted, and should enjoy their moments, even "growing years" together!

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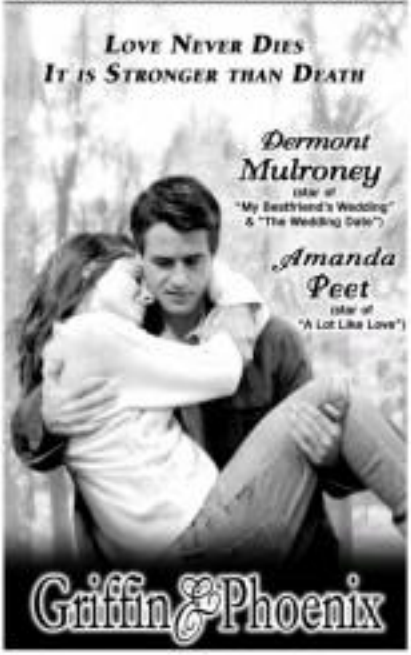

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SATURDAY Special
Editor Nestor U. Torre
Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

NOW SHOWING

True love and high camp

By Rito P. Asilo

"Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo"

Dr. Joan Javier Reyes

Sy Aiello bets Santina, Ryan Agoncillo, Irma Paramo, Shoko Hida

MAKE A BELIDE FOR THE CUSTOM film fest's most delightful entry: Four months after Jed (Ryan Agoncillo) and Angie (Judy Ann Santos) meet and become best friends, they cut off a domestic frenzy when, to keep Jed from migrating to the States, they decide to get married.

The unexpected nuptials—more convenience a murky bundle of the in-laws, Pinoy-style—a tenuous dilemma for many newly married Filipino couples, whether they come from opposing social classes or not. In the young lovers' case, opposites indeed attract. But the popular movie sadly doesn't apply to their parents.

Painting Jed's physician father, Carlos (Ariel Ureta) and versatile mother, Chanito (Gloria Diaz), with single-clichés, the loggerheaded, conceited English-speaking beverage baggage Belén (Gina Pareño), and her smooth-for-her husband, Sonnied (Dolphy Quinto), is one room to like pouring oil on water—they just don't mix!

Worse, further complications ensue when Angie's eyes begin to stray to his preggy rebel half sustain the coming of the stork. But, when Angie gets wind of her hubby's extra-curricular activities, all hell breaks loose—and more after the surprise third party (Julienne Palermo) knows the scene out featuring what his last (naked, hell hath no fury like a vexed, pregnant woman scorned! Once Jed and Angie's union stand a chance?

Based on Mary Ann Bautista's screenplay, Beyond Blackcandy hits my false notes. He executes an entertaining rom-com about relationships—between lovers, friends and enemies, husbands and wives, etc.

The direction has a good track record in this genre: See 2005's "May Bukas Pa" and 2003's "Kung Ako Na Lang Sana." With waggish charm and quick wit, the filmmaker seamlessly swings his characters' stories together and makes their serpentine idiosyncrasies work for the movie.

Reyes likewise successfully eschews the production cardboard-ness. Many much even when tackling serious issues. The picturesque Cebu serves as appropriate emotional tone even as they juggle comedy and light drama.

Except for one ludicrous but otherwise implausible scene where Santina drags the tuffet-and-bewildered Jed to the bed for her romantic rendezvous with dynamic (not-wrong character, the movie hardly falters.

With Judy Ann and Ryan's easy chemistry and honest-to-goodness portrayals, it would have been hard for the duo to keep up with the dumpin pieces set by the glut. our Dax, the wonderful Bel Cruz, and the crowd-pleasing theatre—who almost ruin away with the movie!

Besides, Grace Ejili takes full advantage of a role that fits her as a T, and turns in an unforgettable performance reminiscent of her scene-stealing turn in Ishmael Bernal's 1984 comedy classic, "Working Girls." She scrumptiously goes over the top, but her histrionics never makes those excesses beglodrin.

Along with her triumphant dramatic performance in Jeffrey Jeturian's "Kubrador" early this year, the movie actress proves that, with versatility and cooperation, women of a certain age are still capable of scamming loud. Tinsel, sweets younger and more popular actresses show it matters more!

The film industry consistently churns out mindless pictures that tackle relationships, and you'd think the oft-repeated theme would be superfluous by now.

But good movies, particularly those that inspire viewers to examine their relationships with other people, will always have something insightful and enlightening to say—and they never go out of style!

"Zsa Zsa Zaturnah"

By Joel Lamangan

Dr. Joe Ma. Perlas, Bayani Fadilla, Allen Dizon, Chanda

You have to appreciate Joel Lamangan's gay musical fantasia for striving to do something outside the norm. Fresh from his successful theater run, Carlo Vergara's cult comic book franchise makes its auspicious big-screen debut at the SMDV.

The story revolves around Ada (Bayani Fadilla), a timid, gay beautician who accepts into the beautiful superwoman, Zsa Zsa Limsiwasah (Zsa Zsa Padilla), after he swallows a magical stone—okay, a big rock—in his exotic mouth. With his extravagantly loquacious sidekick, Didi (Chanda), he battles the forces of evil.

But, just when Jindong (Allen Dizon), the guy of his dreams, starts reciprocating his desires, shy glances, amazon-from outer space foil by Queen Amina (Olga Fernandez) arrive to lunch their diabolical plan to invade planet Earth...and disarm the "chauvinistic" male species in unchecked.

Beneath its high camp and unapologetically over-the-top concept are relevant themes that discuss feminism and gender equality. You have to take the film for what it is.

Rated PG

Walter Mart
CINEMA 1
CINEMA 2
MARIKINA CINEMAS
PLARIDEL CINEMAS
Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo
Ligaligo
Enteng Kabisote - 3
Shake, Rattle & Roll - 8
SAPAN CINEMAS
Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo
Enteng Kabisote - 3
Shake, Rattle & Roll - 8
CAINTA CINEMAS
Shake, Rattle & Roll - 8
Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo
Enteng Kabisote - 3

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Cinemalaya 2007 shapes up as competition of 'champions'

By Nestor U. Torre

THE FIRST CINEMALAYA Alternative film festival three years ago succeeded organizers' expectations with such entries as works like "Ang Pagbabalik ni Maestro Oliverio" and "Super Action."

The second edition of the digital film competition was initially disappointing in terms of the general quality of the synopses submitted. But, the festival took extra steps to raise the level of the screenplays subsequently written by way of mentoring.

Exceptional

As a result, the second Cinemalaya didn't suffer in comparison to the first, and produced exceptional movies like "Tribu ng Hari" and "Emotional."

What sold the 2007 Cinemalaya turn out in bri? From the very start, it was clear that the quality of the stories submitted was generally higher than last year's. At 240 entries, the submissions were also the most numerous.

After the 24 semifinalist synopses were chosen, the names of their proponents were revealed, and the organizers were excited, because it turned out that quite a number of leading new digital filmmakers had submitted entries, some of which had survived the first key elimination.

Leading players

This spoke well of the competition, because it indicated that the field's leading players thought well of it, enough for them to opt to compete in it.

Thus, the 2007 fest started to shape up as a competition of "champions," with digital filmmakers with a good track record making the first cut.

Names like Ekhiko Sanmenzo, Aureaus Solito, Joy Abello, Jim Libiran, Jason Laxamou, Arnel Mie and Dennis Marasigan came in the fore, further raising expectations that the 2007 edition could be the digital festival's best one yet.

As part of the screening committee since the festival's inception, we were gratified by the latest outcome and future prospect. Because it proved that Cinemalaya was going in

CINEMALAYA #3

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8 SUPER NOYPI
9 TATLONG BARAHA
10 LIGALIG

ERMITA

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 MANO PO 5
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

METRO EAST

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 MANO PO 5
7 LIGALIG
8 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

NOVALICHES

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
7 LIGALIG
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

CITISQUARE MALABON — PIONEER

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE
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2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 MANO PO 5

DASMARINAS — ANGELES

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 MANO PO 5
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

IMUS — STARMILLS

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
5 LIGALIG
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 5
5 LIGALIG
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

BACOLOD — ILOILO

1 MANO PO 5
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 THE INSTIVITY STORY
6 SUPER NOYPI
1 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 MANO PO 5
4 SUPER NOYPI
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6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

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True love and high camp

From page F1

it is—a highly entertaining and ultimately hilarious farce that dramatizes a deceptively "weak" man's quest to rid blogdom of evil things —and to overcome his fears.

Lamangan compromises the preconceived but otherwise highly entertaining stage musical into a fast-paced and amusing motion picture, but the movie is missing the gay-ness and laugh-a-second humor of its stage version.

Moreover, miscasting is another problem: Zsa Zsa, while ravishingly beautiful, looks too old for her role, while Ruffa looks ridiculously and looks too awkward. But, here's a pleasant surprise: We've never liked Raja Fernandez as a singer or actress, but, despite a snore you hear it snow (you don't

English accent, she is surprisingly good as the queen of the plastic-like demonstrate, a role that right fellow cinema—albeit not too successfully—as the legitimate stage.

The movie reminds you of Armando Goreo' "Emma Sirena the Planet Woman", starring Vilma Santos and the Pinky Montilla, minus "Supergirl." You might find it inferior to Chris Millado's stage version, but if you haven't been to any of its runs, the big-screen version should suffice.

Despite its shortcomings, "Zsa Zsa" makes for a fun, gay night at the movies.

From action . . .

From page F1

comedy, "I Dream be Happy" is now a 6Mm Records Home Video release. Gloria Romero and Eddie Garcia play a couple married for 30 long years, who suddenly decide to split up! Cherry Pie Picache, Joey Marquez and Diana Zubiri play their children, who are caught offguard by their parents' "divorce" -inspired woes.

Barry Manilow

Barry Manilow's latest album, "The Greatest Songs of the Sixties" is a certified hit. It includes pop classics like "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head," "What the World Needs Now Is Love," "There's A Kind of Hush," "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," "Cherish," "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," "Where Did It Love" and "Windy."

'Sa North Diversion Road'

Bernie Marasigan's digital feature, 'Sa North Diversion Road," is now a Star Records Video release. In the film, Irma Adlawan and John Arcilla play a couple in a car swerving to different lanes, each one a different take on the man's infidelity.

'Mega Builders'

Every Thursday at 11 p.m. beginning Jan. 25, Discovery Channel will telecaste "Mega Builders," a series viewers to construction sites in Thailand, the United States, Switzerland, Spain and Canada. The Jan. 25 episode, "Mega Bridge" zeroes in on the construction of the Bangkok Mega Bridge, actually two bridges designed to span a bay of the Chao Phraya River.

Golden harvest

Three Universal Records albums releases have been awarded Gold. They are Sponge Cola's "Bilcha," Diamond's "Are You Involved?" and "The Mark Bernes Dance Party."

Trip to Greece

Send SkyCable subscriber Ivin Antonio recently went on an all-expense paid trip for two to Greece to SkyCable and Star Movies' "Live the Reel Life" raffle promo. Five other subscribers won Sony Ericsson mobile phones, and 30 got Nike and Mikasi Shangri-la gift certificates.

Formulaic effort from outrageous band

By Noulani Torre

THE PICTURE ON THE COVER of "Black Holes and Revelations," Muse's new album...showing four guys sitting around a table on the outdoor of what looks like the planet Mars—is a little spaced-out. The tiny leaves on the tabletop are a particularly nice touch, and squarely blazers in the disc's chosen title.

But...it's when you actually hear their offbeat approach to rock that you'll see how deep their sense of the preposterous runs. Muse doesn't sound like your typical rock band; that's for sure.

In fact, they sound like an amalgamation of bands like Depeche Mode and Radiohead. Those guys have a good ear for hooks and like melodic-ess sensibility.

Over the top

Hailing from Devon, UK, this threesome is made up of guitarist/vocalist Matthew Bellamy, bassist Chris Wolstenholme, and drummer Dominic Howard. They've been playing together since they were kids—and it shows. Our hairdo and over the top it may be, but their latest effort is really a strong, solid record at heart.

The songs are cunningly constructed with all sorts of sounds layered on top of one another, and **melodic hooks that will reel you in** and refuse to let you go.

There are also enough swoon-

MUSE. Good ear for hooks and Radiohead-ess sensibility

worthy moments here and there—like a fairytale guitar and the sound of galloping horses—to keep matters happy.

Unsurprisingly, a something that people look for in any Muse record (for doom) sound layered, or have completely odd-sounding song titles like "Supermassive Black Hole" and "Knights of Cydonia," that it won't sound like Muse at all!

Problems

The problem with this a that after a couple of years and a few albums—from 1999's "Showbiz" to 2001's "The Origin of Symmetry" and 2003's "Absolution"—this trying-not-to-sound-formulaic tack starts to sound, well, formulaic. All the melodic inventions and melodic flourishes start to sound like something they've done before.

It wouldn't have mattered if Muse was indeed something brewing beneath all that sound and fury. But, unfortunately for them, their lyrics are practically hysterical.

Suffering

Suffering from purple sounding and bland-as-dodgebottom semi-music, they delved from the album's overall quality.

The trick here would be to tune a tonal deaf ear to the words and to just listen to the music. Muse may not know how to write an intellectual, but these guys sure know how to hit the right notes!

Cinemalaya 2007 shapes up . . .

Front page F1

strength and reputation—can swing up past laurels, but building on them to achieve greater heights.

This impression was further bolstered when the 18 finalist screenplays were chosen earlier this month. Many strong filmmakers' entries had again survived the cut, along with the screenplays of new but similarly gifted proponents. This indicated that the 2007 competition should be particularly strong.

We're gratified that some of the finalists present the country's youth in unwaveringly new light. Two of the entries are plucked from the start, without knowing their proponents, were: Sullivi's "Foxy" and Yamamoto-Jade Castro's "Nude."

We liked "Foxy" because it was about life in the Philippine Science High School, and showed Filipino teenagers not as the lazy ga-ga dolls they're depicted as in mainstream movies and on many TV shows.

And we pushed for "Nude" because it was similarly important in our book, since it tackled the sad reality of millions of young Filipinos who work at dead-end jobs bearing only vile months or so.

We trust that these and other worthy finalists in the competition will turn out to be superlative movies that will help truly liberate Filipino independent cinema and its growing audiences.

Cesar offers alternative viewing option

MONTANO. Acts, directs and produces the MMFF entry, "Ligalig."

By Rorey M. Olivares

DURING THE PRESS CONference for the suspense thriller, "Ligalig," someone asked actor-director Cesar Montano why his Metro Manila Film Festival entry is so different from the other competing entries, which are mostly geared for kids.

"It's only in our country where a film isn't considered as children. This is not the case in most international film fests I have attended, where the subject matter is geared for mature audiences.

No objection

"Don't get me wrong. I have no objection to fantasy films, and there are economic reasons behind this. The situation is understandable because of the sad state of the local movie industry today. What I'm offering is an alternative to fantasy or horror," he explained.

"Ligalig" is a psychological thriller in the mold of "The Silence of the Lambs." The cast is mostly made up of the actor's friends who were willing to act in the project for a song.

Cesar couldn't think of a better actor to play his character's father than Johnny Delgado. Meanwhile, the role of the cesar hunter-lady fancied on the lap of Rebecca Lozanda.

"After we discovered Bea Martinez (Dina Alaya when we did 'Mano Sus.' In that movie, a girl was pretending to be a boy so as not to be allowed to dive. Regarding our subject, as every time I produce a film, I use it to clear the air a bit," Cesar stated.

Alvin Anson plays a police investigator who tracks down Cesar, the suspected serial killer. He was also in "The Cesar Raid," but he didn't have any scene with Montano. This time, Alvin gets his wish to act with Cesar.

Sidekick

Sharon Agbayani used to be Cesar's sidekick in earlier films. Montano considers the comedian his lucky charm.

Katalina Cruz, on the other hand, is both actress and first producer of "Ligalig." She "fought" Cesar for using a real spider, which she hates, and making it co-produce her first scene of the chase scenes.

The actress reveals that she would submit only from a call holding their love-scenes to do such updates. She plays the same girlfriend of Cesar, a crucial character who holds the key to the mystery.

John Regala and Rotsuken Kaye Santos each have short appear in cameo roles.

Priests in media make up for 'inadequacies' of Catholic press

By Lila Bartolome-Abrams

MEMBERS OF THE FILIPINO CLERGY ZEAL ous in their apostolate in print and broadcast media have certainly made up for "inadequacies" of the Catholic press.

Using the media to preach the gospel, and instruct and guide the faithful, these priests have saved for people's souls by using their unique styles, whether at the pulpit as they deliver homilies, on television, or in their columns in newspapers.

Fr. Bel San Luis, SVD, Fr. Bel writes a column, and hosts a radio program, "Salitang Buhay" on dzRM every Sunday evening. The program invites other priests, religious lay leaders, catechists, and members of Catholic organizations to share their stories of encounter.

Books

He is also the author of several books, among them "Word Alive," which explains the Sunday gospel in the three liturgical cycles. In these books, he offers practical applications about living one's faith and practicing God's word, and he encourages them with his humorous stories. His homilies revolve around

ORBOS AND FARAON. She catalyze styles to preach the Gospel.

interesting stories that illustrate how Christians are challenged to live one another.

His other books, "Stories of Life and Laughter" and "Some More Stories of Life and Laughter," are collections of short stories designed to help preachers, speakers and teachers "reflect about spiritual truths and truths."

Each has celebrating healing masses on local channels every Sunday morning or at Christ the King Seminary in Quezon City, to email him at belsvd@pldtdsl.net.

Self-deprecating humor

Fr. Larry Faraon, Fr. Larry's homilies are spiced up with self-deprecating humor. What's true about him is, he never dilutes the message of the Gospel. He hosted a daily radio program, "Sounds of the Soul," on dzRM FM for seven years. In his choice he reflections that inspired listeners to take the Christian perspective in the midst of the evils of society.

He also used to host the radio program, "Signs and Wonders," on Radio Veritas. On television, his program, "Ang Dating Daan," where he read letters from and dispensed spiritual advice to troubled souls.

Fr. Faraon is now based in Hagonoy, where Catholic member about 154,000 (mostly converts from Iglesia ni Cristo), and celebrates Sunday masses several times a day. He is also a seminary in the evening, he ministers this mission group.

Asked how he finds his life in the affluent city area, he says, "Only a semi-urban life (he can enjoy the peace and tranquility of his province."

Recently, he took about his co-cares home to Manila every month. You can watch his masses every first Sunday of the month at the garden of Rita's Restaurant on Scout Tuazon in Quezon City. Email him at larryfaraon@yahoo.com.

Sunday column

Fr. Jerry Orbos, SVD, Fr. Jerry writes a Sunday column for this paper. He gives inspirational advice on how to live as true Christians. He also attacks immoral politicians with a selfish agenda.

He has written several books ("Moments," "Light Moments," "Simple Moments" and "Sacred Moments") which tell heartwarming stories. His Fr. Jerry Text-a-Moment service enables the poor to contact his daily ministry to cell phone subscribers.

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Jan. 3 7:30 pm

From action star to babysitter

MARTIAL ARTS ICON JACKIE Chan turns his action hero image on its head and plays a babysitter in his surprising, warm movie, "Rob-B-Hood." He's not as a comfortable gambler who hits on taking care of a baby to fend off his debtors. The big problem is, can he overcome his phobia for diapers, milk bottles and sweet lullabies?

MONTAGE

With the assistance of a nurse and his landlord's bodyguard, Wah, the gambler-turned babysitter experiences a measure of success—but not for long. Baby Bi turns out to be the grandson of a tycoon, and is being held by the Triad for a hefty ransom.

But, when his stress leave that the Triad also wants to do the cute tyke in, they refuse to hand him over, as originally agreed upon.

Caught by cops and threatened by ferocious gangsters, Bill's patience extends on a dangerous, but funny escape and escapade to put Bi safely back in his cradle.

Toys 'R' Us at Metro East

Toys' celebrities Maja Salvador and Gerald Anderson opened the recent opening of the fabulous toy paradise, Toys 'R' Us, in Metro Manila's Eastwood Mall. The store does Bill says store's easy manner, Geoffrey helped them welcome the crowd.

The store's seven zones are Baby Girl, Girls, Boys, Infant & Toy, Universe of Imagination, R Outer, Family Fun, and Sports and Outdoor International toy brand and private labels like You and Me, Star Jams, Kids Science and Dream Makers. Toys 'R' Us can also be found at Robinson's Galleria and Robinson's Place Ipia.

Short film

Fil-Norwegian Lyre Hovering (cohort film, "Old Boys with Love Socks," will be screened at the 10th Palm Springs Shortfest on 7 p.m. on Jan. 5, to the 11-minute movie, four old men try to escape from the old comedians at the Christmas Season's anything but festive.

'World at War'

At 9 p.m. on Jan. 7, Cinemax premiers "Left Behind III: World at War," starring Jose Cesario Jr. as the US president at a special home before time when the rumored Anti-Christ Overcomes to invade the United States.

Innocent Voices

Abada Mallo-cinemas will simultaneously screen Berlin film festival winner, "Innocent Voices," which tells the poignant tale of one 12-year-old El Salvadoran boy who suddenly becomes the

CHAN. Together, "Rob-B-Hood."

"man of the house" after his father abandons the family in the middle of a civil war.

Amazingly, the boy finds the courage to keep his sister alive before he's conscripted as a young soldier to the rendering war.

A review credits "Filmmaker Luis Mandoki has crafted a raw, powerful portrait of child-hood ripped to the core."

Movies on TV

On HBO, Jan. 1 at 10:15 a.m., "Wimbledon," Jan. 2 at 8 a.m., "Wimbledon," 9:15, Jan. 3 at noon, "Broken Flowers," Jan. 4 at 9:45 a.m., "Wasteland Secrets," Jan. 5 at 11 p.m., "Twilight Zone, The Movie."

On Cinemax, Jan. 1 at 12:30 a.m., "Wyatt Earp Revenge," Jan. 2 at 1:40 p.m., "Little Stiffs and Big Fakers" Jan. 3 at 3:30 p.m., "Catch-22," 7 p.m., "Carlito's Way" Jan. 4 at 6 a.m., "Tarzan and the Amazons," Jan. 5 at 8 a.m., "Rollerball," 9:00, 1:50 a.m., "Burlesque."

MaruMaru

MaruMaru Gift Trade Store, a unique showcase of beautiful handicrafts from all over the Philippines, took its Christmas Sale on Jan. 6. MaruMaru is on Lanaguan st. in Sta. Ana, near the Our Lady of the Abandoned Church.

MGM Channel highlights

Jan. 1 at 9 p.m., "Secret 6, Jose" with Johnny Depp and Mary Steen Mastersons. Jan. 2 at 9 p.m., "A Prayer for the Dying" with Mickey Rooker and Liam Neeson. Jan. 28 at 8 p.m., "Untamed Heart" with Christian Slater and Marisa Tomei.

Fruitcake of socialites and stars

There are festivities and festivities, but socialites and stars make a beeline for Jo Ta Luis's extravaganza, mark only with the finest ingredients. This season, the Peninsular Lady's bottom-inches Jo Dillon' jewels with Blue Mountain coffee and a touch of Edelsa', Jo D Gold is now layered fruitcake combining molasses for the dark side and honey for the light people. Order Cranberry and Fat Classic Jo D Call 630-9393.

'I Wanna Be Happy'

Indie Films' rollicking family

MMFF

Special visit

RECENTLY, THE ASSOCIATION of Former Flight Attendants of Philippine Airlines (AFlap) visited Carmen Madrid, 90, in her residence at 272 San Rafael st., San Miguel or the Malacañang compound.

Along with Christmas carols, the group brought food and sparkling champagne to celebrate the holiday season with Carmen, who was the oldest attendant of Philippine Airlines to serve PAL flight attendants.

In 1946, Madrid boarded flights at the Nielson Airport, DC3s (late had bucket seats [made of real= cotton twine]). The aircraft interiors used to hate her feet.

Four passengers

Madrid happily narrated that on one time, four passengers asked her for drinks, so she gave the all dreams of four different flights at sundown. What made passengers

would point her on the ground, she would say "Up there I would serve you, but down here is another story."

Once, Carmen was assigned to a Hong Kong flight that was delayed. Instead, she was ordered to fly to Zamboanga. She was looking forward to flying to Hong Kong, but when the flight finally pushed through, another attendant was assigned to take her place. By the time she came back to Manila, the Hong Kong flight had crashed.

TV interview

She became the first woman supervisor of the airlines' maintenance department. In a radio/TV interview in 1973, when Marcos declared martial law, she said, "As long as PAL flies with the Philippine flag on its tail, our country will be okay!"

These days, Carmen loves to read mystery books. She still dreams of Switzerland, a place she would love to visit. She also still has her flying days. She still has her "Life Not Necessary."

Tears were shed at the end of that special visit, but it was a happy occasion such as our beloved Lola Carmen Madrid.

PHOTO BY: Family Collection